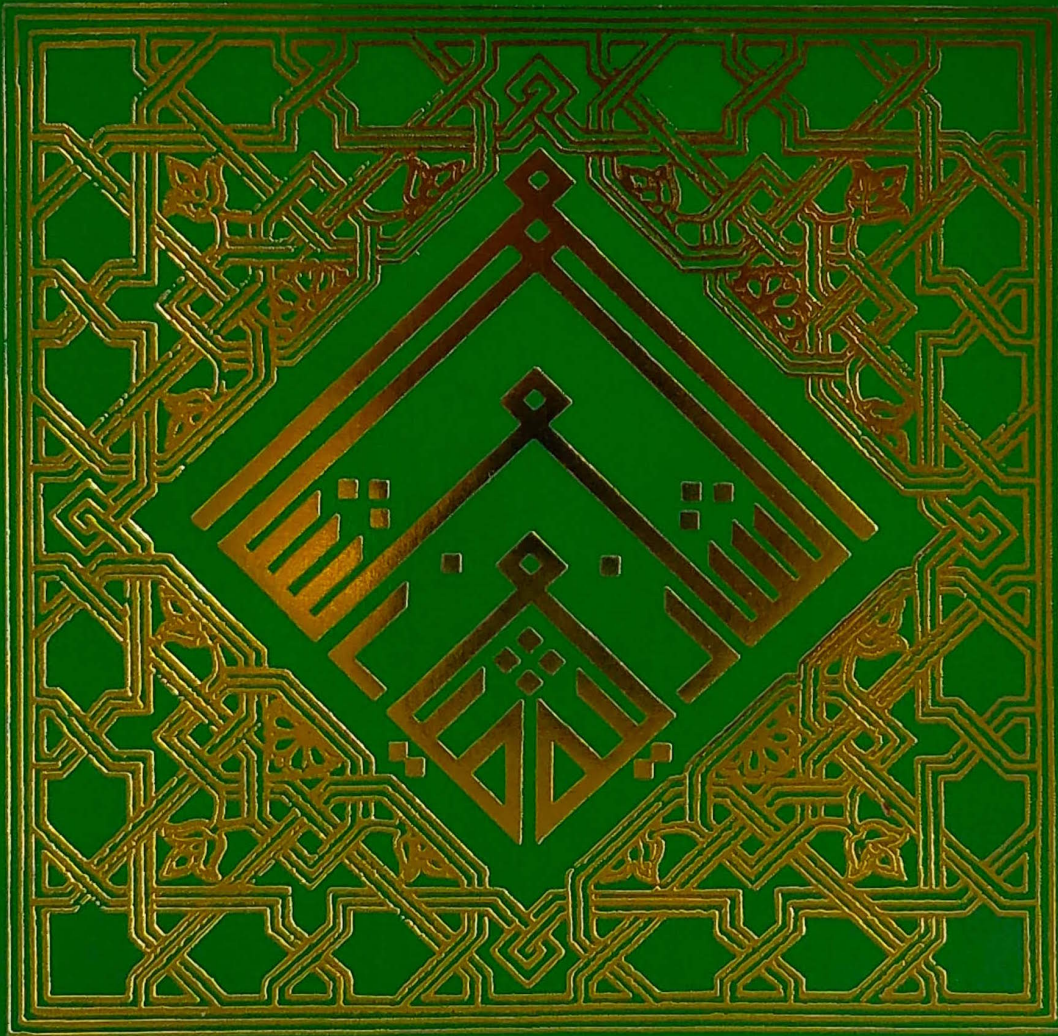


# المدرسة الشاذلية



The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah

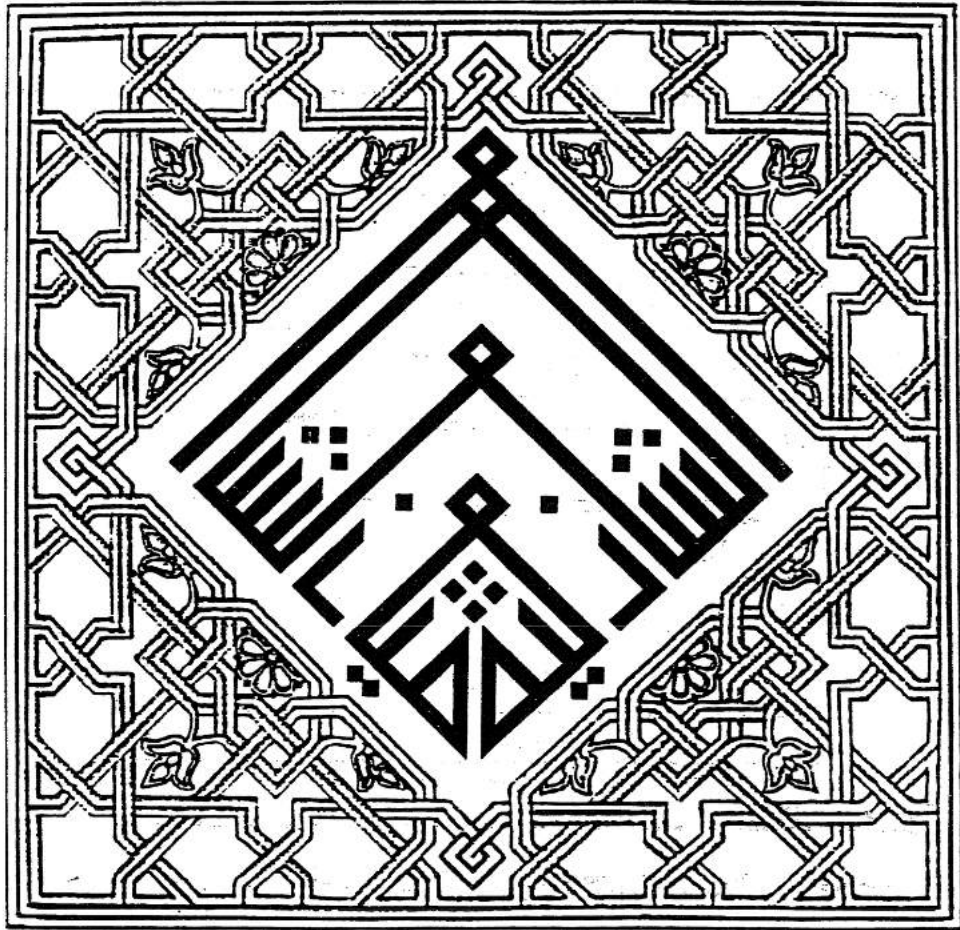
VOLUME TWO  
ORIGINS







المدرسة الشاذلية



The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah

VOLUME TWO  
ORIGINS





Translated by: Ma‘ddāwī az-Zīrr ؎ Abdullāh Nūr ad-Dīn Durkee

المدرسة الشاذلية  
al-Madrasatu-sh-Shādhḍhuliyyah



VOLUME TWO  
ORIGINS

Produced and with Notes by ‘Abdullāh Nūr ad-Dīn Durkee



The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah  
for

Tranquillity of Being and Illumination of Hearts

*Revised Edition*

1433 Hijri © 2012 CE

published by an-Noor Educational Foundation, Green Mountain, Virginia  
Daru-l-Kutub 1992 / 4351 ♦ ISBN No.977-00-3260-X

New ISBN for this printing: 978-0-9826705-3-8

thuluth calligraphy by Ustadh Kamil ‘Ibrahim of Alexandria

composed on the Macintosh in al-Kaatib 1.3, Canvas 3.5, Word 5.1 & 2001

Printed by Hignell Book Printers, Manitoba, Canada

wp.greenmountainschool.org / email: greenmtn@an-noor.net



# Caveat Aspirans !

"If your spiritual insights (*kashf*) contradict Qur'ān or Sunnah  
hold on to the Qur'ān and Sunnah and leave the *kashf* aside.

Say to your self:

Allāh, The Exalted,

vouchsafed to you the infallibility of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

*Kashf* is not so warranted,

neither inspiration (*ilhām*) nor vision (*mushāhadah*)."

Shaykh 'Alī Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Shādhūlī

"Oh seeker, if you would journey to Allah, know:

in order to arrive

{*wuṣūl*}

you must totally and voluntarily renounce your self

{*an-nafs*}.

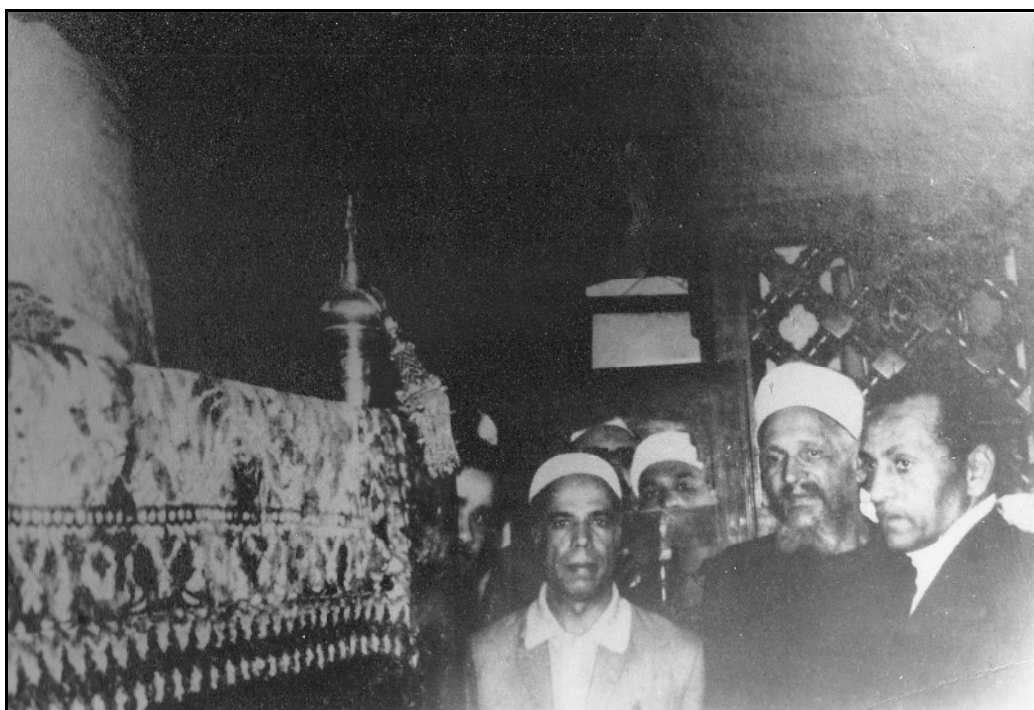
The first step towards that complete renunciation is:

Submission {'*islām*} to the Revealed Law {*aṣḥ-shari'ah*}.

Unless this step is taken there is neither departure nor arrival."

Shaykh Nūr ad-Dīn al-Gharīb





*Shaykh Ibrahīm al-Baṭāwi with Shaykh ʿAbdu-l-Halīm Maḥmūd  
at the maqām of Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhuli in Humaythira*



Shaykh °Abdu-l-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd ؒ, the late Shaykh of al-Azhar (1973-78), wrote in his introduction to *The School of the Shādhḍhulīyyah*: “This book! I was forced to write it!!” For us it has been the same.

I was in my late forties and living in Alexandria near the masjid of Shaykh °Abu-l-Abbās al-Mursī ؒ, a murīd of the Shādhḍhulī shaykh, Dr Ibrahim al-Batawī ؒ, and a former murīd of my first shaykh Sīdī Abdu-r-Raḥman ash-Sharīf ؒ of al-Kḥalīl in occupied Palestine, who had also been a Shādhḍhulī and had passed. One day I understood I didn't really know, even though I had a silsilah, what my own roots were or who I came from. Shaykh Ibrāhīm told me that Dr. °Abdu-l-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd ؒ had written a book called *Madrassah ash-Shādhḍhulīyyah* about Shaykh °Abu-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhulī ؒ and his kḥalifah, Shaykh °Abu-l-Abbās al-Mursī ؒ. He gave me a copy and I began reading to learn about my origins, thinking also to translate it for the benefit of others who, like myself, were ignorant. Around this same time I was blessed by meeting Dr. Ma'adawi az-Zirr ؒ, a long time student of Shaykh °Abdu-l-Ḥalīm ؒ and much influenced by him. He was at that time retired from a long and active career in public works and government, and had enough spare time to spend a couple of hours with me each day in translating and “talking” about the book and its contents. Translation works best done by two people, each strong in the mother tongue of one of the languages and knowing its idioms and specifics. Otherwise you may end up with crazy literal translations; for example ‘traffic jam’ in English could be translated as ‘*confiture de trafic*’ in French, only a traffic jam is not jelly. At the same time I met a group of people in Cairo around Shaykh °Alī Kaumi ؒ, who at least once a year used to visit Humaythīra in the Desert of ‘Aydḥāb where Shaykh °Abu-l-Ḥasan ؒ was buried.

I wound up travelling with them a number of times to Humaythīra, and during these journeys I learned much more about Shaykh °Abu-l-Ḥasan ؒ, especially in the house of the late great waliyyah Ḥajjah Zakīyyah ؒ, where, sitting on what had been her bed, the talk would naturally turn to °Abu-l-Ḥasan ؒ. I learned that °Abu-l-Ḥasan ؒ, his kḥalifah °Abu-l-Abbās ؒ and his first kḥalifah Yakūt al-Arsh ؒ never wrote any books, saying their students were their books. Rather, they had left behind a lot of °Aḥzāb, °Adḥkar and Adwa'. So while we continued to slowly translate the book of Shaykh °Abdu-l-Ḥalīm ؒ, I also began to collect the °Aḥzāb and °Adḥkar of Shaykh °Abu-l-Ḥasan ؒ and his school. These were published in 1995 under the title *Orisons of the Shādhḍhulī*. Also in the course of my trips to Humaythīra, and talking with the people who used to congregate around the masjid of °Abu-l-Abbās ؒ in Alexandria, I learned that the students of the shuyukḥ had written down bits and pieces from their talks and teachings, and I began col-lecting them as well. At the same time as I was working on the translation of *Madrassah ash-Shādhḍhulīyyah* I was able to gather a wealth of details referencing both their teachings and the methods of teaching.

Working on the translation meant I had to travel to Cairo frequently and in the course of one of those visits, my shaykh took me to meet the Shaykḥu-l-Mashaykh of the Ṭurūq as-Ṣūfiyyah in Egypt, Dr. Abu Wafa' at-Taftazani ؒ, who was also serving at that time as vice-rector of Cairo University. I found in talking with him that he had written his doctoral dissertation on the one early Shādhḍhulī, the fourth kḥalifah, Shaykh Ibn °Aṭā' Illāh as-Sakandarī ؒ who, unlike the others, *did* write books (see Chap. 3 for a list of his writings), and that Ibn °Aṭā' Illāh ؒ had faithfully distilled in his writings much of the gist of the teachings of Shaykh °Abu-l-Ḥasan and his school. including, importantly, some of his teachers such as °Abū Madayn al-Gḥawth ؒ and Shaykh °Ibn al-Mashīsh ؒ.



When I spoke with him about what I was doing he generously allowed me to translate his dissertation which forms the fourth part of the present volume. Later, when I returned to Atlantis in the mid-90's, one of my students, Dr. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥakīm ash-Shaghūrī, was inspired to add to this material by collecting as much as he could of the oral teachings of Shaykh Yaqūt al-°Arsh ﷺ, the first khalifah of °Abu-l-Abbās ﷺ and some of his students which in turn now forms the third part of this book.

Looking through *Origins* you may think of it as a kind of grab bag or maybe, °*inshallāh*, a treasure chest. Bear in mind, like Shaykh °Abdu-l-Ḥalīm ﷺ, I was, in many ways, forced to write it. Many times I stopped to work on other things and, additionally, it was worked on by many other people over the past 18 years and. as such, it necessarily has some rough edges and bumpy parts and, indeed, over this time we have come out with at least four editions in differing forms which have now come together in this final fifth edition.

I am not a member of western academia nor, indeed, am I an °alim, but I am, °*inshallāh*, a sincere student of the Shaykh ﷺ and his school and I am and have been since 1986, by the appointment of my shaykh, Dr, Ibrāhīm al-Baṭawī ﷺ a full-time teaching shaykh in this Shādhḍhulī School. With that dimension of teaching in mind I have gathered with the help of many people as much material as I could concerning Shaykh °Abu-l-Ḥasan ﷺ, his school and his teachings and the Origins of the Shādhḍhuliyyah – and Allāh ﷻ knows best.



Shaykh °Abdullāh Nooruddeen Durkee, °Abū Dhikrī al-Ḥusaynī

Servant of the poor, the orphans, the widows, the imprisoned, the ignorant and the broken hearted who, himself, is poor before his Lord and, °*inshallāh*, the dust beneath the feet of the Prophet ﷺ and a lover of his blessed family ﷺ.

Green Mountain, Virginia, United States of Atlantis, Ramaḍān 15, 1434 / August 3, 2012





*On the road to Humaythīra*



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❦

Dr. ʿAbdul Halim Maḥmūd (1910-1978) served as *Shaykh* al-Azhar from 1973 until his death. He was known for his modernizing approach to teaching at al Azhar, preaching moderation and embracing the study of modern science as a religious duty. He is also remembered for reviving *Ṣufism* through his prolific writings and lectures on the subject, and for his unique ability to integrate the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of ʿIslām. From his venerated post at the Azhar, he was able to re-open the gates of traditional *Ṣūfī* ʿIslām to a public enamored of progress and the “West”.

Dr Abu Wafa ʿ al Gunaymi al-Taftazani (1930-1994), vice-rector of Cairo University, was the *Shaykh* al-Maṣḥaykh of the *Ṣufi* Turuq in Egypt in the 80’s and the 90’s. A philosopher and scholar, he argued convincingly in favor of the *Ṣūfī* approach to reality compared to the rationalistic bias of many Western (and Eastern) scholars. Where others found division and conflict, he is known for reconciling *Sufism* with philosophy, and his thought came to be called *at-Tasawwuf al-ʿIslāmī*. This current essay was his doctoral thesis, in which the above ideas are readily apparent.

#### Historical perspective:

As is clear from the introduction of Dr. Abdul Halim Maḥmūd, this book has come into being through many fits and starts, trials and resistances. But it was clear that the *Shaykh* included here wanted it to happen. They evidenced this through vision, financial assistance, and continual insistence on its progress. The bulk of this volume was written in the mid-twentieth century and translated and transliterated in the 1980s by Dr. Maʿadawi Az-Zirr and Sh. Abdullah Nooruddeen Durkee in Cairo. It was copied many times in rough form until 2010 when the final proofing and corrections were undertaken, with the inclusion for the first time of the section of Sh. Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Illāh and the small section on Sh. Yakūt al Arṣḥ. Thanks are due to many people who helped along the way, including Firas Hakim, Dr. Ibrahim Hakim, Ruquyyah Hasan, and Karen Haider. The final collection and editing was done by Hajjah Noura Durkee working with the original formatting and arrangement of Sh. A Nooruddeen Durkee, to whom this book owes its existence, may Allah bless his health and sanctify his secret.



## ★ The Vowel Signs, their Names & Affect On Reading ★

AFFECT	SOUND	FORM	NAME	AFFECT	SOUND	FORM	NAME
2 counts	BĀ	بَا	Ālif	1 count	BA	بَ	Fathah
2 counts	BĀ	بِ	Dagger Ālif	1 count	BI	بِ	Kasrah
2 counts	BĀ	بِي	Reduced Ālif	1 count	BU	بُ	Dammah
don't read	NABA	نَبَا	Silent Ālif	No vowel sound	B	بْ	Sukūn
don't read	YARŌW	يَرَوُا	Guardian Ālif	Doubles letter sound	BBĀ,BBI BBU	بَبَبْ	Tashdid
2,4,or 6 counts according to rules of tajwīd	BĀĀ	بَا	Maddah	Adds 'an', 'un' or 'in' to end of any word	BAN,BIN BUN	بَبَبْ	Tanwīn
Indicated by: ّ	Glottal Stop	أ   إ   أُ	Hamzah	A consonant & the '29th' letter Ignore seat and read sign.	Glottal stop	ءْ	Hamzah
Joins the sound of two words	none	آ	Waṣlah		Glottal Stop	ؤ   وْ	Hamzah

## ★ The 28 Letters and their Numerical Correspondences ★

١	٨	٧	٦	٥	٤	٣	٢	١
ط	ح	ز	و	هـ	د	ج	ب	ا
ṬĀW	ḤĀḤ	ZĀY	WĀW	HĀḤ	DĀL	JĪM	BĀḤ	ALIF
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

١٠	٨٠	٧٠	٦٠	٥٠	٤٠	٣٠	٢٠	١٠
ص	ف	ع	س	ن	م	ل	ك	ي
ṢĀWD	FĀḤ	ʿĀIN	SĪN	NŪN	MĪM	LĀM	KĀF	YĀḤ
90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

١٠٠	٨٠٠	٧٠٠	٦٠٠	٥٠٠	٤٠٠	٣٠٠	٢٠٠	١٠٠
ظ	ض	ذ	خ	ث	ت	ش	ر	ق
ḌĀW	ḌĀWD	ḌĀL	KhĀḤ	ṬĀḤ	TĀḤ	ShĪN	RĀḤ	QĀF
900	800	700	600	500	400	300	200	100

### ☞ A Brief Note on the Transliteration of Arabic ☞

We have employed the standard MESA system modified as in Hart's Rules so that any Arabic letter ending in an 'h' sound {ṭh, ḍh, kh, sh, ḍh, gh} has been clearly distinguished as 'h' to avoid confusion between it and a follow-on 'h'. In the case of *al-hurūfu-sh-shamsiyyah* the 'l' in the article 'al' is absorbed as in '*ash-shams*'. Assimilation (*idghām*) is indicated by a 'n' as in *mañy-yashā* and echoing (*qal-qalah*) by using the unaccented mute 'ā' as in '*Ibārāhim*'. Transliteration at best is only an approximate aid to correct Arabic pronunciation. In the absence of a teacher a careful listening to the tapes of the Qur'ān should further assist the reader

١٠٠٠
غ
GhĀIN
1000

## ★ The 28 Arabic Letters, their Names & Various Forms ★

FINAL	MEDIAL	INITIAL	ALONE	NAME	FINAL	MEDIAL	INITIAL	ALONE	NAME
ض	ضـ	ض	ض	ḌAWḌ	ا	none	none		ĀLIF
ط	طـ	ط	ط	ṬĀW	ب	بـ	ب	ب	BĀ'
ظ	ظـ	ظ	ظ	DhĀW	ت	تـ	ت	ت	TĀ'
ع	عـ	ع	ع	'AĪN	ث	ثـ	ث	ث	ThĀ'
غ	غـ	غ	غ	GhĀĪN	ج	جـ	ج	ج	JĪM
ف	فـ	ف	ف	FĀ'	ح	حـ	ح	ح	HĀ'
ق	قـ	ق	ق	QĀF	خ	خـ	خ	خ	KhĀ'
ك	كـ	ك	ك	KĀF	د	none	none	د	DĀL
ل	لـ	ل	ل	LĀM	ذ	none	none	ذ	DhĀL
م	مـ	م	م	MĪM	ر	none	none	ر	RĀ'
ن	نـ	ن	ن	NŪN	ز	none	none	ز	ZĀY
هـ	هـ	هـ	هـ	HĀ'	س	سـ	س	س	SĪN
و	none	none	و	WĀW	ش	شـ	ش	ش	ShĪN
ي	يـ	ي	ي	YĀ'	ص	صـ	ص	ص	ṢAWḌ

## ★ The Arabic Alphabet & Approximate English Phonics ★

Dh = ذ as in <u>th</u> s	D = د as in <u>day</u>	Kh = خ as in <u>loch</u>	H = ح none	J = ج as in <u>jet</u>	Th = ث as in <u>thin</u>	T = ت as in <u>tal</u> e	B = ب as in <u>hard</u>	Ā = ا as in <u>art</u>
' = ع none	Dh = ظ none	Ṭ = ط as in <u>tall</u>	Ḍ = ض as in <u>daub</u>	Ṣ = ص as in <u>saw</u>	Sh = ش as in <u>ship</u>	S = س as in <u>sun</u>	Z = ز as in <u>zero</u>	R = ر as in <u>ray</u>
W = و as in <u>way</u>	H = هـ as in <u>hay</u>	N = ن as in <u>now</u>	M = م as in <u>map</u>	L = ل as in <u>lit</u>	K' = ك as in <u>kin</u>	Q = ق as in <u>caw</u>	F = ف as in <u>far</u>	Gh = غ none

I = اِ Short Vowels	U = اُ Short Vowels	A = اَ Short Vowels	Y = ي as in <u>yes</u>	I = اِي Long Vowels	Ū = اُو Long Vowels	Ā = اِ Long Vowels
------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------

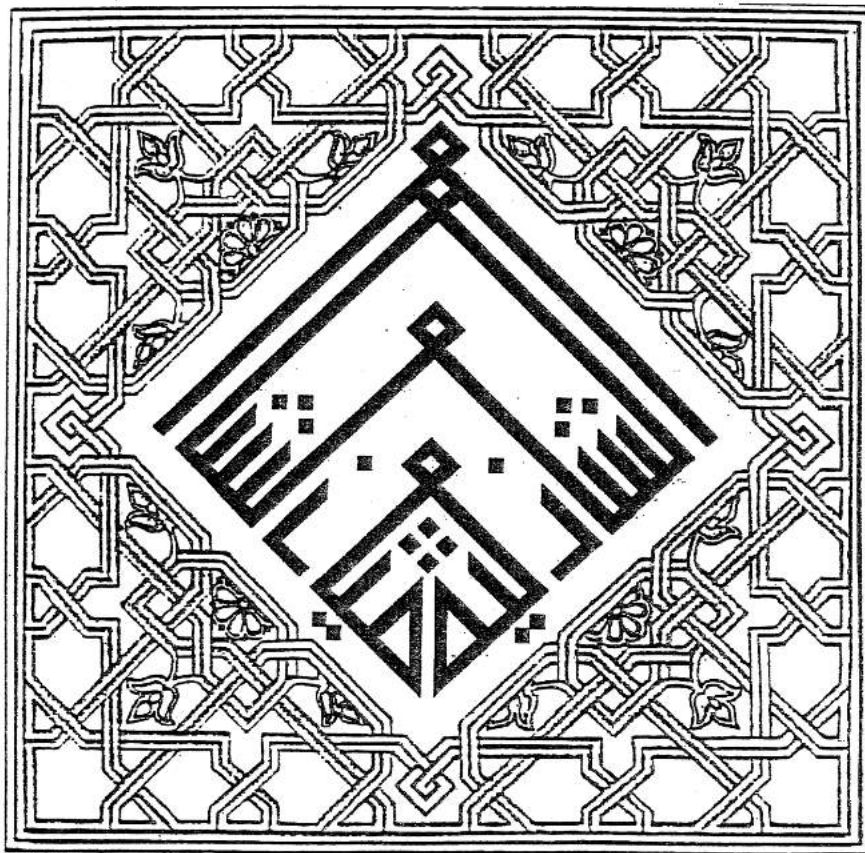
YA = اِي Diphthongs	AY = اِي Diphthongs	AW = اَو Diphthongs	ee = اِ Phonic Vowel Equivalents	oo = اُو Phonic Vowel Equivalents	aah = اَ Phonic Vowel Equivalents	UWW = اَو Doubled Vowels	final form Ū and Ī	IYY = اِي Doubled Vowels
------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------------

AL-QAMAR = الْقَمَرُ al-ḥurūfu-l-qamariyyah a, b, j, h, kh, ' , gh, f, q, k, m, h, w, y	ة or ة Tā' Marbūṭah = AT, AH in pausal form	الشَّمْسُ = الشَّمْسُ al-ḥurūfu-sh-shamsiyyah t, th, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ḏ, l, n
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المَدْرَسَةُ الشَّادْهْدُولِيَّةُ



The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah

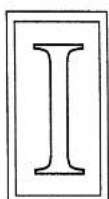
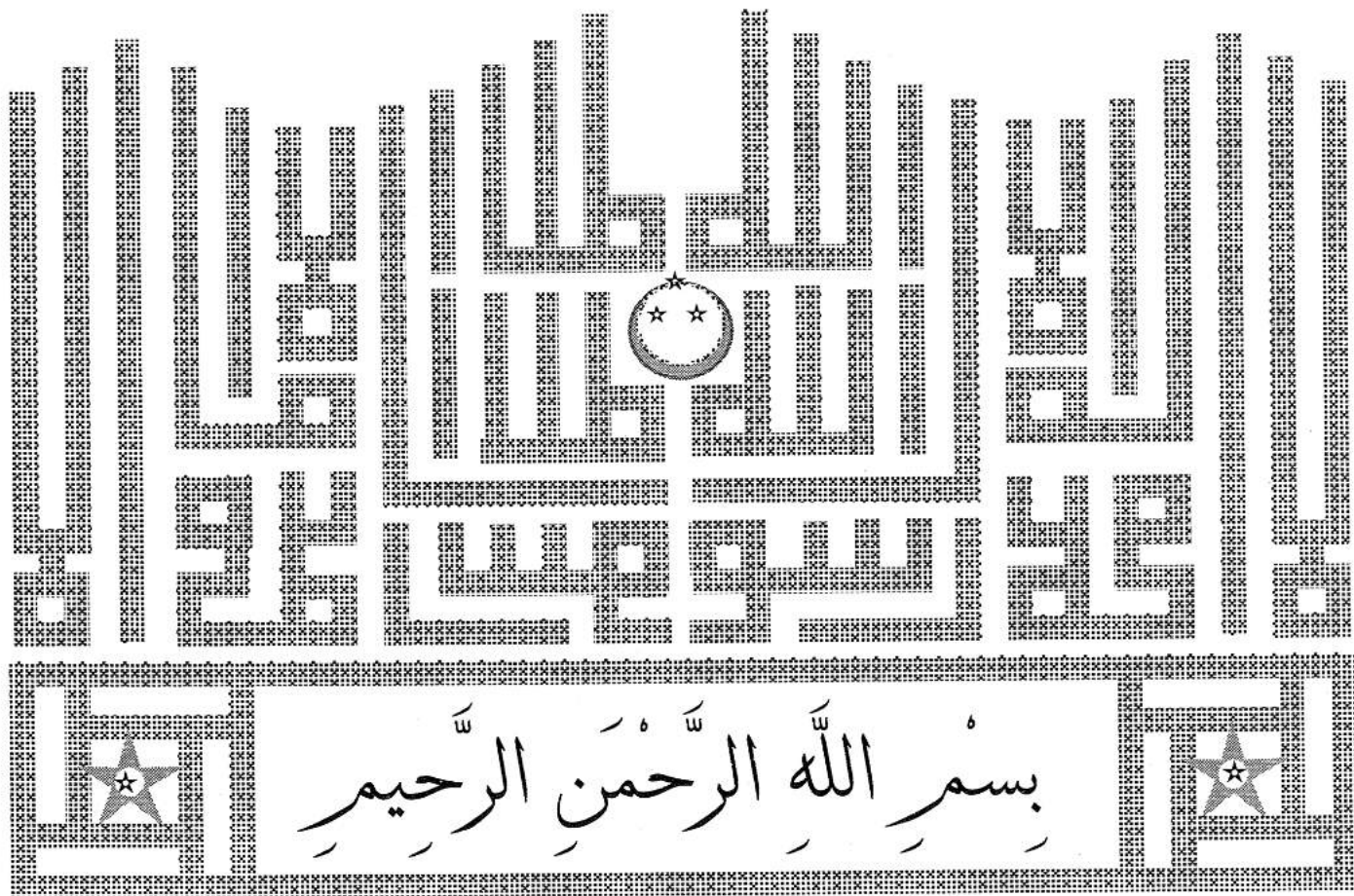
SHAYKH 'ABU-L-ḤASAN AṢH-SHĀDHḌHULI  
VOLUME TWO, BOOK ONE  
**ORIGINS**



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



*Masjid & Tomb of 'Alī Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḥulī  
at the Well of Humaythirah in the desert of 'Aydḥab  
{ circa 1375 Hijri }*



In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing. Praise be to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds and Benedictions and Peace be on the best of Messengers and the Seal of the Prophets, our liege-lord Muḥammad, sent by Allāh as a mercy to all the worlds, and on his family and all of his companions and their followers and the sincere friends of Allāh until the end of time.

## INTRODUCTION

This book! I was forced to write this book and compelled to compose it. I had no free choice to determine the timing of its writing nor could I choose to delay its composition. I shall relate, ʿinṣḥaʿllāh, the story of its composition no matter what people will say. I do not mind if they laugh at it and it does not matter if they believe it or not.

I am relating here what happened to me personally. I shall tell the story as it happened; no more and no less. No doubt similar happenings occur every day, stranger things can happen, yet those who disbelieve, those who doubt, those who ridicule will continue to pursue their disbelief, doubt and ridicule.

Let us forget about them and relate the story as it happened.

More than fifteen years ago I was visiting a friend. We talked about many subjects and finally our conversation reached the subject of Shāykh ʿAlī ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Shādhḍulī. At that time I knew very little about that great Quṭb. Truly I had heard his name everywhere but circumstances did not help me to get in touch with him. I asked my friend if he had any references that could give me a concise and accurate picture of the Shāykh in order to dispel my ignorance. He gave me the book by Professor as-Sandūbī about ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, which included some pages about ʿAlī ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Shādhḍulī. My friend had no other references.

As I went on reading what as-Sandūbī had written, I found myself with a very strong urge to know more about Shaykh ‘Alī ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhūlī and I felt the urge to write about him if Allāh would allow. I continued searching for references here and there and I found in the premises of Dār al-‘Ashīrah al-Muḥammadiyah a manuscript of *al-Mafākhir al-‘Alīyyah* by Ibn ‘Iyyād beautifully written on fine paper in the handwriting of Shaykh al-‘Arrūsī. The Shaykh had corrected his own handwriting and had inserted what he had forgotten and corrected that which he had mistakenly copied. The head of Dār al-‘Ashīrah al-Muḥammadiyah presented me with this beautiful manuscript.

I also found that rare book by Ibn aṣ-Ṣabbagh, may Allāh be content with him, known as “The Pearl of Secrets and the Gem of the Devoted Ones” {*Durrat al-‘Asrār wa Tuḥfat al-Abrār*}, which is one of the most valuable references about Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhūlī. The author got his information about Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan from those who had lived closely with the Shaykh and also from friends of his friends, as he recorded in the beginning of his book:

“Among the whole number of the gifts of Allāh to me and to those who have preceded me was searching out whatever traces may exist of Sayyidina as-Shaykh, the Friend of Allāh {*walī Allāh*}, Trustworthy {*ṣiddīq*}, Gnostic {*‘arīf bi-Llāh*}, Possessor of True Knowledge {*muḥaqqiq*}, The Succour of his Time {*al-ghawth*}, the Pole {*al-quṭb*}, Sharīf of the family of the Youth of the Garden of Paradise {*shabāb al-jannah*} Sayyidina al-Ḥasan and Sayyidina al-Ḥusayn, the mercy of Allāh be eternally upon them, ‘Alī known as aṣh-Shādhūlī, and a recording of whatever *da‘wah* and *‘adhkār wa ‘ahzāb* were ascribed to him. I was wont to make a search for them, to earnestly seek to gather them together, and to expend my zeal in approaching whoever was acquainted with them.

“Some of them I received by direct communication in Tūnis from Abū-l-‘Aza‘im Maḍī bin Sulṭān, pupil and servant of Shaykh ‘Alī ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan. Some of them I secured in the eastern lands from Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad, called Shāraf ad-Dīn, son of Sayyidina Yāqūt al-Ḥabashī known as Yāqūt-al-‘Arsh. Some of them I secured from other students of the Path of our Shaykh and from students of his students among the people of the East and the West, until there was in my possession material the hearing of which is a source of delight and the compilation of which became an object of great value.”

The head of Dār al-‘Ashīrah al-Muḥammadiyah also presented me with a copy of this book.

I went on compiling my references. Among these references was *Laṭā‘if al-Minan fi Manāqib al-Shaykh ‘Abī-l-‘Abbās wa Shaykihi ‘Abī-l-Ḥasan*, which is the biography of Shaykh ‘Abū-l-‘Abbās and his Shaykh, Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhūlī. That book was written by Ibn ‘Atā‘illāh as-Sakandarī who was a mūrīd of Shaykh ‘Abū-l-‘Abbās who in turn was the mūrīd and spiritual heir {*al-warith*} of Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhūlī. At that time I had the Egyptian edition of the book.

I continued reading and studying about Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan and I even wrote an article titled *Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhūlī and the battle of Manṣurah* for the magazine of al-Azhar. But then I once again became busy with other things. I closed the pages of Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan. Days and years passed and the pages of ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan remained closed.

In 1952 I was invited for one month to Zaytūnah University in Tūnis as a lecturing professor. There my memories of ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan were revived. I tasted his fragrance in that place. I ascended the mountain where he used to worship and also entered the cave in which he used to seclude himself for prayers and contemplation. It is a cave which can accommodate a number of people in its mouth but as one proceeds within it, it narrows until



it can only accommodate a few people and finally it reaches a place where it only accommodates a single person. I went to this part of the cave, as ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan was used to, and sat worshipping humbly as he did. It was in this cave that he spent many long hours both by day and by night, by himself, invoking Allāh in a seclusion filled with deep spiritual longing {*shawq*}, love {*maḥabbah*} and a heart of certainty {*qalb al-yaqīn*}.

In the cave I found myself ensouled with tranquillity of self {*tumaʿninatu-n-nafs*}, serenity {*sakīnah*} and clarity of thought in a rare and wonderful manner.

I went several times to the cave on the top of the mountain and at each visit the desire to write a book about ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan crossed my mind but still the pages remained closed. My references, however, increased. In Tūnis I obtained a Tunisian edition of *Laṭāʾif al-Minan* and the Shaykh of the masjid at the top of the mountain gave me a copy of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan's ʿAḥzāb {Orisons and Litanies} printed in Tūnis. I also found myself regularly present at the Ḥaḍrah of the Shādhḍulīyah in precisely the same place where it had been established by ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh be content with him.

During this same period Professor ʿAlī Sālim ʿAmmār published a lengthy study in two volumes about Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan. These volumes strengthened and augmented my references — yet still did the pages remain closed.

Then a number of concerted occurrences and varying circumstances caused me to take the Shādhḍulī Way {*ākḥḍaḥtu-ṭ-ṭarīqa-š-Šhādhḍulīyah*} and to mingle in the atmosphere of the muridūn. I continued to recite the ʿawrād and the ʿadhkār of the Shādhḍulī. Things continued on in this way until March of the year 1964.

At that time I was visiting professor {*ʿustādhān zāʿiran*} at the Islamic University in Tarāblus {Tripoli} and, having completed my lectures in al-Bayḍāʾ, Bangḥazī, and Zlimān, was preparing to travel for the purpose of making Ḥājj {pilgrimage} to the sacred precincts of the Ancient House of Allāh in Makkah the Blessed. I was in Tarāblus awaiting the time of my sailing to the Holy Lands when I had a ruʾyā {veridical dream} in which I saw a man that I knew by the name of ʿ*Tawfiq* {success or good fortune}. In the ruʾyā he was dressed not in his usual attire but as a policeman holding handcuffs. He said to me in the form of an order, “Write about Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-Šhādhḍulī !!!”

I did not reply and wanted to ignore the subject and talk about something else. At that point he grabbed my hands and threatened to put me in handcuffs. I said to him, “Does this mean I should leave off from the work I am doing and write about Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-Šhādhḍulī?” He said, “Yes. Leave off from what is in your hands and write about aṣḤ-Šhādhḍulī!!!” Having delivered this message he seemed contented and I immediately awoke.

Allāh facilitated the Ḥājj for me, praise be to Him. Upon my return to al-Qāhirah {Cairo} I attempted, in spite of the vividness of the ruʾyā, to postpone writing about Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan. Why this was I didn't know then and still don't know.

Instead I went on studying Shaykh Sahl bin ʿAbdu-Llāh Abū Muḥammad at-Tustarī, as I was determined to lecture the students at the College of ʿUṣūlu-d-Dīn on Ṣūfīc Tafsīr and I intended choosing my examples from at-Tustarī, as I thought it would be beneficial to the students to have a book on him as he has not had his fair share of study.

Just as I was at the beginning of my study and writing for that book one of those storms which confront humanity from time to time alienated me from at-Tustarī and from the subject of Šūfic Tafsīr. Indeed it alienated me, in place and in time, from the spiritual atmosphere altogether. The pages of at-Tustarī were closed and the urge to write about him was erased from my soul.

At that time I remembered the ru'yā and remembered 'Tawfiq' ordering me; "Leave off from what is in your hands and write about ash-Shādhḍulī!!!" But once again weeks passed in which I engaged myself only in casual reading. During these weeks the impressions I had about the ru'yā faded almost completely until they became marginal in my memory.

Something else came to mind. I found that in the past I had written on the subject of *al-ʾImān* {certified belief or secure faith} and had additionally spoken on that subject on both radio and television. It seemed it would be simple for me to handle that subject, for all I would have to do would be to go back to my previous writings and re-shape here and retrench there and finally publish a study on the subject which would be useful for Egypt in that particular period.

One day I took all my references and went on a visit to the countryside hoping that I would find there an atmosphere conducive to concentration and clarity. I travelled with some friends by taxi and upon our arrival the taxi in turn departed — along with all my references; a fact I only realised when the taxi was out of sight and reach. I had not even taken its number.

When the taxi was out of sight the ru'yā came to mind once again as it had during "the storm of at-Tustarī". Once again I heard the words of 'Tawfiq' ordering me "Leave off from what is in your hands and write about ash-Shādhḍulī!!!"

I said to myself, "The lesson is complete. I must, with the help and support of Allāh, write about 'Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍulī. Other writings can come later as Allāh wishes."

I returned back to my old references on ash-Shādhḍulī and found them to be complete: main references, secondary references, lives of the Šūfis {*aṭ-ṭabaqāt*}, references both old and new. In short everything I needed to write about ash-Shādhḍulī was to hand. The task loomed pleasant and easy and inwardly I found myself keen and ready to write and to Allāh is the praise. This then is the story of Shaykh 'Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍulī and myself, told it as it happened. No more & no less.

I pray that this book will be as useful to others as Shaykh 'Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍulī is to me, may Allāh be content with him and sanctify his secret. And Allāh is the best to respond.



## THE LIFE OF ʿALĪ ʿABŪ-L-ḤASAN

Shaykh ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, may Allāh be content with him, said, “I was with Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan in al-Qayrwān. It was Ramaḍān. It was the night of al-Jumuʿah. It was the twenty-seventh night. It was the Night of Destiny. The Shaykh entered that he might pray in congregation and I accompanied him.

“When we entered with deference I saw the ʿawlīyāʾ {friends} gather around him as the bees gather around sugar. When we had completed the prayers and left the masjid the Shaykh said to me, ‘This was a great evening. It was surely the Night of Destiny, for I heard the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, say, ‘Oh ʿAlī, purify your garments {*ṭḥīyābak*}.’ I replied to him, ‘Yā Rasūl Allāh. What is my garment?’ He said, ‘Know that Allāh has bestowed upon you five robes of honour: the garment of love {*al-maḥabbah*}, the garment of knowledge {*al-maʿarifah*}, the garment of oneness {*at-tawḥīd*}, the garment of faith {*al-ʾīmān*} and the garment of surrender {*al-ʾislām*}.’

‘The one who loves Allāh yearns for nothing else.

The one who knows Allāh finds everything else trivial.

The one who perceives the oneness of Allāh will never join anything to Him.

The one who has faith in Allāh is sheltered from all harm.

The one who surrenders to Allah will seldom rebel {*yaṣiyyah*};

and if he rebels he is excused — indeed he is excused even before he seeks pardon.’

“I then understood the meaning of Allāh saying in Qurʾān, ‘Purify your garment’.{76:4}<sup>1</sup>”

Shaykh Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh as-Sakandari said of Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan:

“No one whose heart was illuminated or any one who was a knower {*ʿarif*} with clear vision has ever denied his station as the *Quṭb* {spiritual axis}.

“He brought prodigious wonders to this Path. He unloosed a flood of knowledge in the field of essential reality {*al-ḥaqīqah*}. He made wide the way for the travellers {*as-sālikīn*}. I heard the Shaykh, the ʿImām of ʿIslām, Tāqīu-d-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Qushayrī, say, ‘I have never known anyone more knowledgeable about Allāh than Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-ṢḤĀDHDHULĪ, may Allāh be content with him.’”<sup>2</sup>

One of the callers to the Way of Allāh came to al-ʿIskandariyyah and met Shaykh Matīnu-d-Dīn al-ʿAsmar, who said of him, “This man invites people to the door of Allāh. Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan caused them to enter in to Allāh.”

The testimony that is really esteemed by the people of inner knowledge {*ʾahli-l-bāṭin*} as well as the people of outer knowledge {*ʾahli-dh-dhāhir*} and the people of the knowledge of the Truth {*ʾahli-l-ḥaqq*} is the testimony of Shaykh al-ʾIslām al-ʿIzz bin ʿabdu-s-Salām as related by Shaykh Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh as-Sakandari in *Laṭāʾif al-Minan*.

<sup>1</sup> *Laṭāʾif al-Minan* by Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh page 48 in the Tunisian edition

<sup>2</sup> *Laṭāʾif al-Minan*, page 58



“The Shaykh, the Knower, Makīnu-d-Dīn al-ʿAsmar, may Allāh be content with him, said, ‘I was present at the tent in al-Manṣūrah with the Shaykh, the ʿImām, ʿIzzu-d-Dīn bin ʿAbdu-s-Salām, the Shaykh Majdu-d-Dīn bin Taqīu-d-Dīn ʿAlī bin Wahab al-Qushayrī, the Teacher, the Shaykh Muḥiyu-d-Dīn bin Sarāqah, the Shaykh Majdu-d-Dīn al-ʿIkḥmīmī and Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhūlī, may Allāh be pleased with them all. al-Qushayrī’s *Risālah* was being read and they were all speaking with the exception of Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan who was silent. When they finished their discourse they said, “Yā Sīdī, we want to hear from you.” He replied, “You are the Masters of the Time {*Sadāt al-Waqt*} and you have spoken.” They continued by saying again, “Yā Sīdī we need to hear from you.” He kept silent for some time and then began to relate wondrous secrets {*bi-l-āsraru-l-ʿajībah*} and theophanic knowledge {*al-ʿulumu-l-jalīlah*}.

The Shaykh, the ʿImām, ʿIzza-d-Dīn said upon leaving the tent, “Heard you these extraordinary words so recently [sprung] from Allāh?”

Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan’s words “so recently [sprung] from Allāh” as the ʿImām ʿIzza-d-Dīn said, were so because they were uttered from the direct inspiration {*ʾilhām*} of Allāh. It was not knowledge obtained from books. It was neither imitation nor was it reproduction. It was not a result of study and research, although the Shaykh conducted many studies and undertook extensive research. It was not the fruit of reading books or of studying logic, though the Shaykh had read profoundly and deeply. It was, rather, inspiration {*ʾilhām*}, perception {*baṣīrah*} and light {*nūr*} from the Light of Allāh, may He be praised.

In spite of the domain {*manẓilah*} that he reached, or perhaps due to having reached this domain, he said, “He who does not increase his surrender to Allāh due to either reliance on his own knowledge or his own deeds will perish.” He also said, “Do not rely on your knowledge for support. Rely only upon Allāh. Never seek to publicise your knowledge in order that people may confirm you. Make known your knowledge in order that Allāh may confirm you.”



Most definitely we would like to know something about this shaykh about whom the Shaykh, the ʿImām, ʿIzza-d-Dīn said, “Heard you those extraordinary words so recently [sprung] from Allāh?”

His name is ʿAlī bin ʿabdu-llāh bin ʿabdu-l-Jabbār and his lineage can be traced back to Sayyidina al-Ḥasan bin ʿAlī bin ʿAbī Ṭālib. He was born in the Maghḥrib in the five hundred and ninety-third year of the migration {1196 CE} in a village called Ghumārah. He learned the religious sciences {*al-ʿulūmu-d-dīniyah*} and attained great distinction in his knowledge.

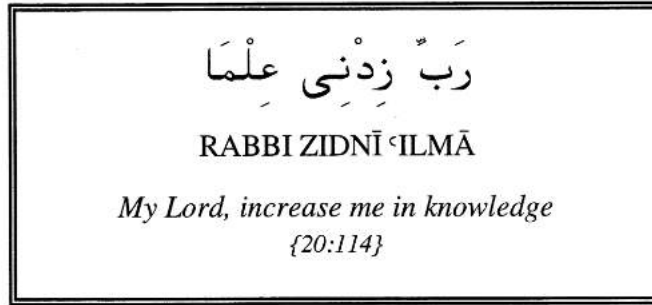
Shaykh Ibn ʿAṭāʾllāh as-Sakandarī said, “He did not enter the Way of the Folk {*Tariq ʾal-Qawm = at-taṣawwuf*} until he mastered the outer sciences {*al-ʿulūmu-d-dhāhirah*}”. Outer science, however precise and profound it may be, will never hold the aspiring soul from advancing towards the unknown {*al-ghayb*} and attempting to catch a glimpse of its blessings and illumination.

How can the human reach the worlds of the unknown?

How can the human plunge into its depths?

How can one soar to its heights, beholding its beauties and the splendours of its attractions?

Whenever aspiring souls {*an-nufūs at-ṭamuḥah*} reach a certain level of realisation or degree of completion in their knowledge, they are inevitably impelled to seek further. Absolute completion is for Allāh alone. Allāh has ordered His Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, to say,



ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan felt an impelling desire to get closer to Allāh {*al-qurb mina-Llāh*} that his heart might be illuminated by spiritual knowledge {*al-maʿarifah*} and that Allāh would raise for him the veils {*yakshiffa-Llāhu lahu-l-hijab*}.

How to quench this thirst? How to tread the Path {*aṭ-ṭarīq*}? From where to begin?

From where to begin?

Those who have gone before us have marked out the Way {*aṭ-ṭarīq*}. The easy and secure beginning should be made in the company of a trustworthy person who knows the way, has examined its hazards and knows its pitfalls and, above all, whose heart has been illumined by knowledge of the direct way to Allāh {*bi-ṭ-ṭarīq al-qāṣd ʿila-Llāh*}.

Where could he find a Shaykh? What is the path to the Shaykh?

Baghdād in the time of the ʿAbbāsīyīn had been the goal of students of the world {*ad-dunya*} and the religion {*ad-dīn*}. It teemed with great religious scholars {*kibāru-l-fuqahāʿ*}, knowers of the spoken transmission {*ʿaʿlāmu-l-muḥadithīn*} and elevated Ṣūfī masters {*al-qimamu-l-mawālīn min aṣ-ṣūfīyyah*}. In time past both great legists and friends {*ʿawliyāʿ*} dwelt within the gates of Baghdād.

Now, however, it was the seventh century hijrah and the glorious days of Baghdād lay centuries in the past. The question before ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan was: if Baghdād had lost its material attractions, were there still masters there who could expertly delineate the path and direct their students without risking error?

ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan was moved by a strong urge to go to Baghdād. For him it was a flight to Allāh {*hijratu ilā-Llāh*}. It was the flight {*hijrah*} of a pure and zealous soul. A migration {*hijrah*} of love mingled with expectations and, at every moment along the way, questions for which he had no answers.

Would he find the Shaykh?

Who would he be?

Would the meeting with the Shaykh be favourable?

What would the Shaykh advise him?

If he did not find the Shaykh in Baghdād where would he find him?

Upon his arrival in Baghdād he was met by the ʿfriendsʹ {*al-ʿawliyāʿ*}, the loftiest of whom, in Abū-l-Ḥasanʹs opinion, was Shaykh ʿAbī al-Faṭḥ al-Wāsiṭī, of whom he said, “When I entered al-ʿIrāq I met the pious Shaykh ʿAbī al-Faṭḥ al-Wāsiṭī. There was nobody in al-ʿIrāq like him.”

But ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan's real aspiration was to meet the Quṭb, and where could he find *him*?

In al-ʿIrāq he sees and mingles with pure pious souls {*aṣ-ṣāliḥūn*} and the friends of Allah {*ʿawlīyāʿ-ullāh*} and sees the light upon their faces and the purity of their beings but he does not find the Quṭb. One day one of the friends of Allāh says to him, "You are seeking the Quṭb in al-ʿIrāq but he is to be found in your homeland. Return home. You will find him there."<sup>3</sup>

So it was that ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan returned to his own lands full of hope. There is an old Arabic poem that might serve to convey his feelings:



I thought I was going to find her today  
but I found that she is still far away.

I am asking if you know where she is  
for since she left I have no news of her.

If I knew where her folks had camped,  
or to what country they might have gone,

I would ride the wind after her  
even were she beyond the stars.



....and so it was that the walī spoke the Truth when he told ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan that the Quṭb was in his homeland and that he would meet him there, as he relates in this story of events that took place on his return to his native village

"When I drew near to him {the Quṭb}, he was living in Ḡhumārah, in a cave on top of the mountain. I made a complete ablution {*ghuṣl*} in a spring at the bottom of that mountain, and left all my past deeds and knowledge {*kḥrajat ʿan ʿilmī wa ʿamalī*} and went up to him as one totally destitute {*faqīrān*} and, lo, I found him coming down to me dressed in a patched robe and with a cap made from palm leaves on his head. 'Welcome {*marḥaban*} to ʿAlī bin ʿAbdu-Llāh bin ʿAbdu-l-Jabbār' and he continued on until he had traced my forebearers up to the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him. Then he said, 'Oh ʿAlī. You have ascended to us devoid of your knowledge and your deeds and you shall receive from us the wealth of this world and the next.'

"I was seized by awe of him and remained with him for some days until Allāh awakened my perception {*baṣirati*} and I saw that he possessed many supernatural powers {*kḥaraq ʿādāt kathīrah*}."<sup>4</sup>

Who is this knower by Allāh {*al-ʿarīf bi-Llāh*}?

Who is this pole and pivot {*quṭb*}?

We need to know of his lights and his blessings.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Sabbagh in *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Sabbagh in *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*



He is the great walī, Sayyidīnā ʿAbdu-s-Salām bin Mashīsh, of whom the author of *ad-Daruriyyat-l-Bahiyah* {The Radiant Pearls} says, “He is the greatest Qutb, the well known peak and high mountain. He is the shining moon who does not need anyone to relate stories about him as he is very well known to the world and on his station as Qutb no two people can differ. His way is a remedy to all ills and the mention of his name is a blessing to whomsoever hears it. His secrets fill the horizon and his deeds are the stories of all caravans and gatherings. He combined two honours, the material and the spiritual. {*aṭ-ṭini wa-d-dini*}.”

The position {*maqām*} of Sayyidīnā ʿAbdu-s-Sallām bin Mashīsh in the West is like ʿImām Shāfiʿs in Miṣr, as Ibn ʿIyyād states in *al-Mafākhir al-ʿAlīyyah*,

“Ibn Mashīsh was a strong adherent {*mutamasik*} of Qurʿān and Sunnah. He said the best of deeds are four after four. The first four are: loving Allāh {*al-maḥabbatu-li-llāh*}, contentment with what Allāh has ordered {*ar-riḍā bi-qadāʾa-llāh*}, asceticism {*az-zuhd*} in the world and reliance {*tawakkul*} upon Allāh.

The four that follow are: Establishing what Allāh has ordained {*al-farāʾid*}, refraining from what Allāh has forbidden {*ḥaruma*}, desisting from what does not concern you and extreme care and exacting scrupulousness {*warʿa*} even in the most minute matters.”

The reader is invited to contemplate the vastness of the light in which Sayyidīnā ʿAbdu-s-Salām bin Mashīsh was immersed and the degree of heavenly blessings which were accorded him from what was related about him by ʿImām ash-Shāʿrānī,

“Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhūlī said, ‘My instructor, may Allāh be merciful to him, said,<sup>5</sup>



“Look sharply with the eye of your faith & you will find Allāh present in all things  
{*tajid Allāhu fī kullī shayʾ*}.

He is with every thing and every thing is with Him,  
above every thing — near to every thing  
surrounding every thing.

He is Near {*qurb*} in His Attributes {*ṣifah*}.  
Encompassing through his properties {*naʿtihi*}.  
Refrain from thinking in terms of limit, of condition,  
of place, of direction, of space  
of associates,  
of personality.

Cause every thing to vanish in His Attributes  
The First {*al-ʾawwal*} and the Last {*al-ʾākhir*}  
The Revealed {*aḍḥ-ḍḥāhir*} and the Concealed {*al-bāṭin*}  
He is Allāh

&

There is no thing with Him.”

The author of *Laṭāʾif al-Minan* relates a beautiful saying about love, allowing the reader to understand that he who uttered it truly journeyed through the fields of love and drank deeply from its springs:

<sup>5</sup> Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhūlī by Professor ʿAlī Sālam ʿAmmārah,

“The Shaykh, al-Qutb, ‘Abd as-Salām bin Mashīsh, the Shaykh of ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhūli, Allāh be pleased with them both, said, “Purify yourself from idolatry {*shirk*}. Whenever the love of the material world seduces you from purity, purify {*taṭaharah*} your self. Whenever you are swayed by lust {*shahwah*}, correct your self by turning back {*tawbah*} to Allāh. Love Allāh through reverence and withdrawal {*at-tawqīr*}. Become a drunkard to the point that when you find yourself becoming sober, drink some more of that heavenly love until drunkenness and sobriety are one by Allāh and, through beholding His ravishing Beauty, His sublime Light and Sanctity, you forget about being drunk, drinking, the drink and the cup.

“Maybe I am talking to some body who does not know the meaning of Love {*al-maḥabah*}, or Drink {*ash-sharāb*}, or Drinking {*ash-shurb*}, or The Cup {*al-k’as*}, or Drunkenness {*as-sukr*}, or Sobriety {*aṣ-ṣaḥw*}. Indeed there are people who are drowning and don’t know it. But if someone asks,

‘Please teach me that of which I am ignorant or that of which He has granted to me but I have not yet realized,’  
 “I would say, ‘Love of Allāh absorbs the heart of whom He loves by revealing to that one something of His Ravishing Beauty and Sacred Sublimity.’”

وَشَرَابُ الْمَحَبَّةِ :  
 مَرَجُ الْأَوْصَافِ بِالْأَوْصَافِ وَالْأَخْلَاقِ بِالْأَخْلَاقِ  
 وَالْأَنْوَارِ بِالْأَنْوَارِ وَالْأَسْمَاءِ بِالْأَسْمَاءِ وَالنَّعُوتِ بِالنَّعُوتِ  
 وَالْأَفْعَالِ بِالْأَفْعَالِ  
 وَيَتَسَّعُ فِيهِ النَّظَرُ لِمَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

WA SHĀRĀBU-L-MAḤABAH:

MARAJU-L-ʾAWṢĀFI BI-L-ʾAWṢĀFI WA-L-ʾAKḤLĀQI BI-L-ʾAKḤLAQI  
 WA-L-ʾANWĀRI BI-L-ʾANWĀR WA-L-ʾASMĀʾI BI-L-ʾASMĀʾI WA-N-NʾŪTI BI-N-NAʾŪTI  
 WA-L-ʾAFʿALI BI-L-ʾAFʿĀLI  
 WA YATTASIʿU FĪHI-N-NADḤĀRU LIMAN SHĀʾA-LLĀHU AZZA WA JALLA

The Drink of Love

is the mixing of Attribute with attributes, Innate Nature with innate nature,  
 Light with light, Names with names, Form with form, Actions with actions;  
 vision is widened as Allah, The Glorious, The Mighty wishes

“Drinking quenches the thirst of the heart and the limbs and the veins. Each drinks according to their preparation and readiness. Some drink without an intermediary. Allāh, praised be He, provides that for them. Some drink through a medium such as an angel or a sage or from those who have been brought near {*al-muqarabīn*}.

“Some get drunk upon sight of The Cup without having tasted a drop. After they drink, after they see, after they are drunk from drinking, then they are sober.

“The Cup is both the room {*magħrīfa*} and the spoon {*magħrīfa*} of The Truth {*al-ḥaqq*}. In this room and with this spoon He ladles out the pure drink that quenches the thirst of whomsoever He wishes and whomsoever He chooses from His chosen slaves and His khulafāʾ.

“The one who Drinks sometimes beholds that Cup in the form of an image {*ṣūrah*}, sometimes in the form of a ‘meaning’ {*maʿnawīyah*}, and sometimes he beholds it in the form of learning {*ʿilmīyah*}.

“The Image is the food of the physical body and the self {*al-ʿabdān wa-l-ʿanfas*}.

“The Meaning is the food of hearts and minds {*al-qulūb wa-l-ʿuqūl*}.

“The Learning is the food of spirit and secret subtle centres {*al-ʿarwāḥ wa-l-ʿasrār*}.

“How sweet is such a drink and how blessed the one who drinks and carries on drinking and never ceases to drink. We ask Allāh for His Favour {*faḍl*}. That Favour He bestows upon whom He chooses and Allāh is the Gracious, the Exalted.

“Sometimes a group of lovers meet together and drink from the same Cup. They may also drink from a myriad of cups and even drinks from one Cup may differ, according to the Lover; as well the drink may differ according to the number of Cups from which the Lover drinks.”<sup>6</sup>

Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-ŠĤĀDHḌULĪ said, “A man once came to my teacher and said to him, ‘Invest me with Holy Offices {*waḍḥāʿif*; pl of *waḍḥifah*} and Spiritual Practices {*ʿawrād*; pl of *wird*}.’ My instructor became angry and said, ‘What do you think I am? A prophet? To assign duties? Duties are well known, sins are also well known. Stick to your duties and avoid sin. Truly duties serve to make you whole and truly sin devastates you. Keep your heart from worshipping the world, worshipping women, worshipping fame, and pursuing your desires. Be content with that which Allāh has decreed for you. If it gives you contentment then thank Allāh. If it brings you dissatisfaction then exercise patience and endurance.”

In truth the Love of Allāh is the true Quṭb {pivot, pole} around which all blessedness revolves and which is the source from which all lights {*al-ʿanwār*} and all wonders {*al-karāmāt*} spring. The origin of that stems from carrying out four deeds:

Scrupulous truthfulness { <i>ṣadaqu-l-waraʿ</i> }	Good intentions { <i>ḥasanu-l-niyah</i> }
Excellence in action { <i>ikhlāṣu-l-ʿamal</i> }	Love of learning { <i>maḥabatu-l-ʿilm</i> }

None of this will be available to you unless you keep the company of an honest brother {*ʾakḥu-l-ṣāliḥ*} or a sincere and faithful shaykh {*shaykhū nāsīḥ*}.

Ibn Mashīsh astounded ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-ŠĤĀDHḌULĪ. He astounded him with his knowledge built upon the Book and the Practice {*al-kitāb wa-s-sunnah*} and he astounded him with his authority and wonders {*walāyatahu wa karāmātahu*}.

The author of *Durratu-l-ʿAsrār* relates that ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan said of Ibn Mashīsh:

“I saw that he possessed many supernatural powers {*kḥaraq ʿādāt kathīrah*}. Once I was sitting with him whilst a son of his played on his lap. It came to my mind to ask him about the Greatest Name of Allāh {*ismu-llāhu-l-ʿaḍḥam*}. The child arose and came to me and, throwing his arms about my neck, shook me saying, “Oh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan. You wanted to ask the Shaykh about ismu-llāhu-l-ʿaḍḥam. It is not important to question him

<sup>6</sup>*Latāʿif al-Minan* pp 34,35



concerning ʾismu-llāhu-l-ʿaḍḥam. What is important is that you should become ʾismu-llāhu-l-ʿaḍḥam. Which is to say; the secret of Allāh {*sirru-llāh*} should be instilled in your heart.”

When he finished speaking the shaykh smiled and said to me, “*He* has answered for me.”

Ibn Maṣḥīsh outlined the future of Abū-l-Ḥasan when the period of his stay with his Shaykh had come to its end, saying, “Yā ʿAlī, depart to the region of ʿIfriqiyyah and dwell there in a town called ʿShādhilah, for Allāh will call you ash-Shādhīlī. After that you will depart for the city of Tūnis where charges will be brought against you by the authorities {*as-saltanah*} and after which you will move to the Orient {*ash-sharq*} where you will inherit the *Qutbiyyah* {office of the Qutb}.

This program {*al-manhaj*}, outlined by Ibn Maṣḥīsh who was beholding it in the Unknown {*al-ghayb*} where he saw it by the Light of Allāh {*bi-nūru-llāh*}, was literally realized in all details. Let us follow the way in which it came about.

As he prepared to leave his Shaykh, ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan turned to him saying, “Yā Sīdī, counsellor me {*ʿawṣanī*}!”

“Yā ʿAlī. Allāh is Allāh and people are people. Keep your tongue from mentioning them and your heart from leaning towards them. Guard your limbs and carry out the heavenly orders {*al-farāʾid*}. The Authority of Allāh {*walāyatu-llāh*} is upon you. Make no mention of this except under obligation imposed upon you by Allāh. Your *waraʿ* is completed.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَرْحِتْنِيْ مِنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ، وَ مِنْ اَلْعَوَارِضِ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ،  
و تَجِنِّيْ مِنْ شَرِّهِمْ، وَ اَغْنِنِيْ بِخَيْرِكَ عَنْ خَيْرِهِمْ،  
وَ تَوَلَّنِيْ بِالْخُصُوْصِيَّةِ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ،  
اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

ALLĀHUMMA ARḤITĪ MIN DHĪKRIHIM WA MINA-L-ʿAWĀRIḌI MIN QIBALIHIM  
WA TAJINĪ MIN SHARRIHIM, WA-GḤ-NINĪ BI-KḤAYRIKA ʿAN KḤAYRAHIM,  
WA TAWALLANI BI-L-KḤUṢṢIYYATI MINM-BAYNIHIM  
ʾINNAKA ʿALĀ KULLI SHĀYIN QADĪR

Oh Allāh, rest me from me their remembrance and the obstacles they place in my way.  
Save me from their evil, and enrich me with Your Good from their good.  
Make me to be Your exclusive Friend set apart from them. ..  
Truly You have power over all things.

{3:29}

Thus did our Shaykh bid farewell to his Shaykh and thus did he set out upon the Way that had been made clear for him.

His journeying in this time was not like his journeying when he had travelled to al-ʿIrāq. Now he travels with guidance and under orders. If he has been forewarned by his Shaykh of trouble awaiting him in Tūnis, yet has he been promised a good end in the eastern lands. ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan's sojourn in Shādhilah was a period of review and

consolidation based on worship and devotion, which is the essential foundation for anyone seeking to build anything that abides {*al-khālid*}.

There is no doubt that ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan, having been endowed with the Guidance {*hidāyah*} of Allāh, as a worshipper and an emigrant {*muhājirā*} and an itinerant palmer {*sāʾih*} on the Path of Allāh {*sabīlu-llāh*}, was a lighthouse of guidance {*minaru hidāyah*} and a source of light {*mabʿathu nūr*} wherever he stayed, especially after the Guidance from Allāh that he received from Ibn Maṣḥish. Still he was not yet the Quṭb. That inheritance lay in the East.

The Shaykh found himself in need of that struggle {*jihad*} with his self which has always been a characteristic of all the sincere {*mukhlisūn*} ones who have felt, in consonance with their leader, the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, in need {in the respect} of the constant graciousness of Allāh. For the friends of Allāh the way of increasing knowledge {*ziyadatu-ʿilm*} was through struggle {*jihad*} for Allāh.

رَبِّ زِدْنِي ʿILMĀ

RABBI ZIDNĪ ʿILMĀ

*My Lord, Increase me in knowledge*  
{20:114}

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

WA-L-LADḤĪNA JĀHADŪ FĪNĀ LANAHDIYANNAHUM SUBULANA

*Those who struggle in Our Cause, surely we shall guide them in Our Ways.*  
{29:69}

Allāh bestows His grants and favours as He wills. Neither are they the result of reason nor are they the consequence of acts.

When our Shaykh moved to Ṣḥādḥilah he decided to live on the outskirts of town rather than in the town itself. Even so, people gathered around him as though they had expected him, though no mention of his arrival had been circulated. This decided him to travel to the mountain called Zagḥwān, which he did in the company of one of the men of Ṣḥadḥila called ʿAbū Muḥammad ʿAbdu-llāh bin Sallamah, a pious and honest man who had great insight {*makāshafa*} into the unseen.

ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan's stay on the mountain had two great benefits:

First, he had free time {*faragh*} to concentrate on worship {*ibādah*}, which was essential, for he had not yet received permission {*idhn*} to guide others. This period was necessary to complete the inner discipline necessary to avoid temptation, to distance himself from fitnah and to overcome the effects stemming from the residue of human bias. In this context he told the following story as related by Ibn aṣ-Ṣabbāgh:

"I was out wandering one night when I came upon a cave and thought to pass the night there. I heard within the cave a voice of a man praising Allāh and I said to my self, 'By Allāh I will not disturb him or cause him trouble.' so I slept the night at the mouth of the cave. Just before the dawn I heard him say, 'Oh Allāh truly some

people have sought You in order that men should be brought into their presence and be subject to them. Oh Allāh, I pray to You that they be removed from me and that they might shun me so that I should have no refuge other than You.'

"When it became light he came out and it was none other than my Guide. I said to him, 'Ya Sidī, last night I heard you say thus and so.' He replied, 'Oh Alī, which is better for you? That you should say, 'Be You for Me' or 'Cause the hearts of Your creatures to be submissive to me?' Surely if He is for you then you will have all things."

It is absolutely necessary to have that void {*tafaragh*} to gain the benefit of spiritual rest {*ʿastajamaman ruḥiyan*}, a psychological healing {*ʿalājan nafsian*}, and to bring about the resurrection of inner virtue {*baṭḥan li-kūwāmian min al-faḍāʾil*}.

Rigorous solitude in that void is necessary for progress on the course of the traveller to Allāh, to bring about the sacred ascension {*maʿrāj al-quḍus*} so that the traveller may thus advance along the route of the dwellings of the spirit. {*manazila-l-ʿarwāḥ*}.

Rigorous solitude is necessary for voiding oneself of everything except Allāh.

فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ

FAFIRRŪŪ ʾILA-LLĀH

*So flee unto Allāh.*  
{51:50}

وَعَجَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَىٰ

WA ʿAJILTU ʿILAYKA RABBI LI-TARDĀ

*I have hastened to You my Lord only that I may please You.*  
{20:84}

Secondly, the journey to the mountain of Zaghwān made it possible for ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan to avoid meetings and contact with those who, wanting only to sup at his spiritual table {*māʿidatu-r-ruḥḥiyyah*}, might disrupt his spiritual practices. So it was that only those who were really keen on increasing their knowledge ascended to him on the mountain. In this way he did not actually shut himself off from those who really wanted to meet him but only prudently insured that he would have the time for worship and his struggle {*jihad*} in the Way of Allāh.

The Shaykh remained worshipping on the mountain for a long time accompanied by "the pure Shaykh ʾAbū Muḥammad ʿAbdu-LLāh bin Sallamah called al-Habībī, the walī, the visionary {*al-mukāshaf*}", who was the first companion of our Shaykh from Shādhilah. It is he who has related many of the wonders {*karāmāt*} of the Shaykh that are recorded in *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*.

"One day whilst on the mountain of Zaghwān the Shaykh was reading from *Sūrat al-ʿAnʿām* {The Chapter of the Cattle}, "Forsake those who take their religion for a sport and a diversion and who are deluded by the life of the world. Remind [humanity] hereby lest a soul be destroyed by what it has earned. Apart from Allāh it has neither



friend nor intercessor; and though it offer every kind of compensation it shall not be accepted — when he reached this part of the āyah in which Allāh says,

وَإِنْ تَعْدِلْ كُلَّ عَدْلٍ لَّا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا

WA ʾIN TAʿDIL KULLA ʿADLIL-L-LA YUʾKHADH MINHĀĀ

*and though it {the nafs} offers every manner of compensation it will not be accepted*  
{6:70p}

he was overcome by a very elevated state {ḥāl}. He continued contemplating the āyah and whilst contemplating the āyah his body began to rock, and whenever he rocked the whole mountain would shake until finally the mountain was still.”

In response to the repeated questions of people regarding that period on the mountain, al-Ḥabībī related many of the ʿkarāmāt of the Shaykh. The pure type of life {*al-fitrah*} they led yielded fruit in the form of karāmāt, of transparency of the soul {*shafāfiyatu-n-nafs*}, nearness to Allāh {*al-qurb min Allāh*} and the contentment {*riḍwān*} which He bestows.

“Abū-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ibrī, known as al-Ḥaṭṭāb, related to us, ‘One day I said to Sīdī al-Ḥabībī, “tell me something of what you have seen concerning Sīdī ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan.” He replied, “I have seen many things regarding him, a part of which I will relate to you. I remained with him forty days on Jabal Zagħwān eating the herbs of the fields and laurel leaves until the inside of my cheeks became sore. Then he said to me, ‘Yā ʿAbdu-Llāh, do you want some thing {other} to eat? I replied to him, ‘Yā Sīdī, looking at you enables me to do without it.’ He said to me, ‘Tomorrow, ʾinshāʾllāh, we shall go down to Shadhilah and some gift shall come to us on the way.’

“The next morning we descended from the mountain and whilst walking through a valley he said to me, ‘Yā ʿabdu-Llāh, if I should leave the road do not follow me.’

“An intense ḥāl came over him and he went off the road until he was some distance from me. Then I saw four birds the size of storks flying over his head. Each one of them came down {in turn} and conversed with him and then flew away. Among them were birds about the size of swallows which surrounded him and filled the air between the earth and the horizon wheeling in circles around him.

“When they had disappeared from sight he returned to me and asked, ‘Yā ʿabdu-Llāh, did you see anything?’ I told him what I had seen and he said to me, ‘The four birds are some of the angels of the fourth heaven which came to question me about spiritual knowledge {*ʿilm*} and I spoke with them. The birds which took the form of swallows are the spirits of saints which came to receive a blessing from our arrival.’

“He remained on Jabal Zagħwān a long time and Allāh caused a spring of clear fresh running water to flow for him, and there he had a cave in which to dwell. Until now the call to prayer {*adhān*} is heard coming from the mountain at the hours of the Ṣalāh.”

No wonder Allāh, praised be He, caused a spring of sweet water to gush forth for them {*Allāh subḥanahu ʾaynbaʿalahumā ʾaynan tajri bi-māʾin ʿadhḥb*}, and no wonder that al-Ḥabībī used to see angels surrounding Abū-l-Ḥasan whom he would question and who replied to him, and no wonder that on occasion al-Ḥabībī would

see Abū-l-Ḥasan walking and talking with the birds. No wonder then that he also saw the souls of the ʿawliyāʾ {ʿarwāḥu-l-ʿawliyāʾ} visiting ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan to receive his blessings {barakātuh}.

al-Ḥabībī was not ‘imagining’ things when he saw these events, neither was he hallucinating nor was he seeing phantasms. Allāh says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا  
تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ  
أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ  
نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ

INNA-L-LADHĪNA QĀLŪ RABBUNA-LLAHU THUMMA-S-TAQĀMŪ  
TATANAZZALU ʿALAYHIMU-L-MALĀʾĪKATU

ʿALĀ TAKHĀFŪ WA LĀ TAḤZANŪ WA ʿABASHIRŪ BI-L-JANNATI-L-LATI KUNTUM TŪʿADŪN  
- NAḤNU ʿAWLIĀʾUKUM FĪ-L-ḤAYĀTĪ-D-DUNYĀ WA FĪ-L-ʾAKHĪRAH

*and those who have said, our Lord is Allāh and then gone straight  
the angels descend upon them  
saying, ‘Fear not, neither sorrow, and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised  
we are your friends in this life and the life to come.’*

{41:30,31}

“Truly the angels do descend on any person in this life possessed of two essential qualities:

Certified belief or-secure faith {*al-ʾīmān*}

Uprightness or straightness {*al-ʾistiqāmah*}

ʾImām Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Allāh be pleased with him, said as a direct result of his own experiences that the honest murīd on the path to Allāh witnesses, “at the beginning of the path spiritual insights {*al-mukāshāfat*} and internal visions {*al-mushāhadāt*} even in the waking state, to the extent that they see angels and the spirits of the prophets {ʿarwāḥu-l-ʿanbiyāʾ}, they hear their voices and they benefit from them. They advance in their state to...”<sup>78</sup>

This brings to an end our account of the days in Shādhilah. This was a period of preparation {*ʾistaʿdād*}, training {*tadrīb*} and refining the spirit {*ṣaqla ruḥī*}. When it was accomplished it was imperative for the Shaykh to move and prepare for action.

The Shaykh was ordered to appear on the ‘horizon’<sup>9</sup> {*al-ʾufuq*} after he had been raised to the firmament {*as-samāʾ*}. This is the way the life of the perfected friend {ʿawliyāʾu-l-kumal} is arranged and ordered {*nasaq*}. First they ascend {*ʾirtafāʿ*} to Allāh, then they migrate {*hijrah*} to Allāh.

إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَى رَبِّي

<sup>7</sup> Durrat al-ʾAsrār p. 28

<sup>8</sup> al-Munaqada min al-Dalāl p 129 {5th printing} Dar al-Kitab al-Ḥadith

ʾINNĪ MUHĀJIRUN ʾILĀ RABBĪ

*I will flee to my Lord*  
{29:26p}

إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَّهْدِينِ

ʾINNĪ DhĀHIBUN ʾILĀ RABBĪ SAYAHDĪN

*I am going to my Lord, He will guide me*  
{37:99p}

فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ

FA-FIRRŪ ʾILA-LLĀH

*Therefore flee unto Allāh*  
{51.50p}

Truly it is flight {*firār*} unto Allāh by means of worship and seclusion {*an-nusk*}, by prayer {*aṣ-ṣalāh*} and fasting {*aṣ-ṣiyām*}. By the Holy Recital {*al-qirāʾah*} of the Qurʾān and lauds {*at-tasbīḥ*} until the heart is empty of every thing but Allāh; until the heart is filled by Allāh and with Allāh. This is the time of risking everything for the sake of purification {*ʾinaha fataratu-l-ghāru wa-t-taḥanath*}. ..

When the vacancy of the heart is filled by Allāh and the self {*al-naḥs*} has been purified from all filth and ṣhayṭān has been flung into the flames, then it is the radiant dawn of the illuminated heart.

Thus begins the second phase:

The time to return to impart guidance {*al-hidāyah*} and direction {*ʾirshād*} to the worshippers of Allāh. Thus the walī is ordered to depart from his retreat {*al-khalwah*} and isolation {*al-ʿazal*} and made to descend into the gathering place {*al-maydān*}<sup>10</sup> under the control of Allāh, to call by insight and discernment {*baṣīrah*}, guiding by His Permission and Order {*maʿdhūnan amaʿmūrān*}.

ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan related how he left the mountain of Zaghwān and the cave in which he dwelt. He says,

“I was told, ‘ʿAlī, go down {*ʾihbit*} to the people for they will benefit from you.’

“I said, ‘Oh my Sustainer, relieve me from their company.’

“I was told, ‘Descend {*ʾinzil*}! Peace will accompany you and blame will depart from you.’

“I said, ‘Will You leave me to eat from the money of the people?’

“I was told, ‘Spend {*ʾinfiq*}, Oh ʿAlī! All wealth is Mine {*al-malī*}. Dispense {*ʾinsh ʾit*} from your pocket or dispense from the unseen. {*mīn al-jayb ʾaw mīn al-ghayb*}.”

In this state did ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan descend from the mountain and left Shādhilah to embark on a new phase. The first phase as outlined by his Shaykh Ibn Maṣhīsh was complete and had unfolded as he had foretold.

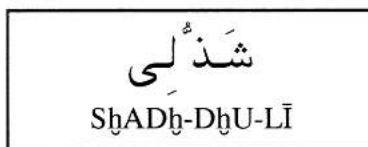
<sup>9</sup> to enter the field of vision, to become seen

<sup>10</sup> also carries meaning of: battleground, combat area, fighting zone, central square of a town, the sphere of activity.



Before we leave Shādhilah we must clarify the relationship between the name of the village of Shādhila and our Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shadhḡulī. This has to do with the connection between his name and the village. He himself was puzzled by it and asked Allāh, “Oh my Sustainer, why have you chosen this name for me and I am not from this place?” He was told, “You are shādh-dḡu-li with tashḡid on the dhāl.”

That is to say: singled out {shadh} for Me {dhū-lī}. For My Service and My Love alone {al-mufrad}.



Thus, while many people persist in calling him Shaykh Shādhilī or even Shaykh Shazilī they are not correct in this matter. They miss the real {ḥaqiqah} point of his name, may Allāh be content with him.

As the Shaykh travelled from Shādhilah to Tūnis he was preparing himself for the test that he knew he would meet and which had been foretold by his Shaykh when he had said, “You will be tested īn the city of Tūnis where charges will be brought against you by the authorities {as-salṭanah}.”

The Shaykh knew Tūnis, as he had sojourned there for a while in the midst of his first journey to and from the East. He had been surprised at that time by its poverty and the hunger of its people, and had tried in his way to alleviate the hunger of the people. In that context he told a story of his meeting there with al-Kḡiḡr, peace be upon him, and the kindness and help he received from him.

“When I entered the city of Tūnis, as a young man, I found there a great famine and I came upon starving people in the market places. I said to myself, ‘Had I the money to buy bread for these hungry people I would surely do it.’ Then there came a thought to my innermost heart, ‘Take what is in your pocket.’ So I shook my pocket and, lo, in it there were silver coins. So I went to the baker at Bāb al-Manārah and said to him, ‘Count up your bread. He counted it for me. Then I offered it to the people who seized upon it. I drew out the coins and handed them to the baker. He took them to be counterfeit, saying, ‘These are Magḡribī and you Magḡaribah are alchemists.’ So I gave him my burnous and a small bag as pawn on the price of the bread and turned to the door. Right by the door stood a man who said to me, ‘Oh ‘Alī, where are the coins?’ I gave them to him and he took them in his hand and then returned them saying, ‘Pay the baker.’ I paid the baker who accepted them from me saying, ‘These are good.’ I took my burnous and bag and searched for the man but I did not find him. I remained for some days confused within myself until on Friday I went to Jāmi‘ az-Zaytūnah, close by the reserved section on the east side of the masjid. There I offered rak’atayn {taḡiyyatu-l-masjid}, and as I pronounced peace upon the two angels, lo, I found the man seated on my right. I greeted him and he smiled at me, saying,

‘Oh ‘Alī! You thought to yourself, ‘Had I the money to buy bread for these hungry people I would surely do it.’ You would be as generous as Allāh, The Generous, toward His creatures. Had He willed, He would have fed them, for He is more aware of their need than you.’

I asked, ‘Oh Sīdī, by Allāh, who are you?’ He replied, ‘I am Aḡmad al-Kḡiḡr {the Green Man}. I was in China and I was told, ‘Go and look for My Friend ‘Alī in Tūnis.’ and I came hurrying to you.’ After I completed the Ṣalātu-l-Jum‘ah {Friday Prayers} I looked for him but I did not find him.”

Previously he had gone to Tūnis without direction {ghayr muwajjah}, he went like any one. But now he travelled under Orders {bi-l-ʿamr} and with Permission {idhn}. Now he was there to Call to the Way of Allāh for he had heard the call, “ʿAlī, go down to the people for they will benefit from you.”

In the sphere of religious knowledge {ʿulūmu-d-dīn} callers are of two basic types.

1) Callers {duʿāh} to Allāh who make their call within the realm of common permission {al-idhnu-l-ʿām} and the universal obligation {al-wājibu-l-ʿām} to “enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency” {3:110} {amurūna bi-l-māʿrūfi wa taʾnhawnā ʿani-l-munkar}. The impact of such people differs from one to another according to the purity of their being {safāʾu-n-nafs}, the fluency of their tongue {ṭalāqatu-l-lisān} and their knowledge of the Generous Book {al-kitābu-l-karīm} and the Noble Practice {as-sunnatu-sh-sharīfah}. Some of them have little or no impact due to the impurity of their beings or their inability to speak well or because of their ignorance regarding Qurʾān and Sunnah.

2) Callers {duʿāh} to Allāh who call from out of the sphere of deep spiritual insight {baṣīrah} call with a special {khāṣṣ} call for they themselves have heard the Summoning Call {an-nidāʾ} and what they heard they did not hear by mere haphazard chance {muṣaḍafah}. Not at all! They engaged themselves in struggle with their unpurified selves {jāhadū ʿanfusuhum} until their nafs became obedient {ʿaṭāʿat} and they nourished their hearts with that obedience until their hearts were enlightened {ʾistanārat}. The dawning {ʿasbaḥa} of their innermost secrets {sirruhum} is with Allāh and they are manifest {ʾaḍāḥū} as the ʾawliyāʾ.

They wait for the permission in every thing even that which is permitted {al-mubāḥ} to them {faḍlan} in addition to the special prerogatives of their calling.

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan explained the criteria for discerning the permissibility of the permitted and the meaning of verification of permission of the ‘rights’ of the walī thus:

“The explanation of ‘permission of Allāh’ is His Knowledge according to His Saying, “And then I taught you the Book, the Wisdom, The Torah and the Injīl {The Evangel or Gospels}” {3:48}. Then He said twice, “by permission of Allāh {bi-idhni-llāh}” {3:49p}. Meaning in the context of the ayāt that he enabled ʿĪsā {Jesus}, peace be upon him, to possess this knowledge by His Knowledge. So when the Divine Word {qawl} accompanies it, it becomes the most complete and most extensive possible in the way of the allowable {al-mubāḥ} and the allotments of the self. As for the obligatory {al-wājib} and the commendable {mandūb} they are covered by the Divine Command {al-amr}, but then the allowable is outside of their realm. So the walī is at this point in need of ‘permission’.

“Do not confuse ‘permission’ {idhn} with ‘command’ {amr} for you will fall into error or you will cause to slip from one side to the other a part of the requirements of the law, and thus you will be one of the ignorant ones. The meaning of *permission* in regards to the rights of a walī is a light which expands {yanbasat} and spreads over the heart. It is a light created by Allāh in it and upon it; and thus he sees it as a light with light or a darkness beneath the light.

“The light indicates that you are free to take if you want or leave it, advance or turn back, grant or withhold, rise or sit, journey or remain. This is the realm of the allowable {al-mubāḥ} in which what is permitted is a matter of choice. When the Divine Word {qawl} accompanies it, then the action is confirmed by the Will of Allāh {bi-ʾamru-llāh}; it leaves the realm of the permissible and becomes commendable {mandūb}.

“If darkness lurks beneath the light spreading in the heart then it cannot be but that a throb or stab of contraction {*qabd*} will burst in upon the heart. In this case put it aside {*jānibā*} and refrain from this. For it is that which is warned of {*al-maḥdhūr*} or something of its ilk.

“If the darkness is like a shroud or mist {*ghīmah*} of trouble {*ṣadaʿa*} which neither cleaves the heart nor frees the mind, do not occupy {*faragḥa*} your mind {*adh-dhīn*} with it but run — run from it for it is surely a thing detested {*makrūh*}.

“Finally you should confirm everything by the clarity of the Book of Allāh Most High or by the Sunnah or by the consensus {*ʿijmāʿ*} or by a variant opinion of a master whom you follow such as al-Mālik or ash-Shāfiʿī or other of the rightly guided khulafāʾ. Then form a judgement on a firm basis.

“If your insights {*kashf*} contradict Qurʾān or Sunnah, hold on to the Qurʾān or Sunnah and leave your insights aside. The infallibility of Qurʾān or Sunnah is vouchsafed by Allāh. Kashf is not so warranted, neither is inspiration {*ʾilhām*} nor vision {*mushāhadah*}.

“By no means make judgement on the basis of your intellect {*ʿaql*} or your opinions {*raʾy*} for many have gone astray {*dalla*} as a result of doing that.

“Give scrupulousness {*waraʾ*} its due and “Follow not after that of which you have no knowledge {17:36}. If you follow along these lines before too long you will be given the clear proof from your Lord with witness from Him following it.”

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ  
إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ  
كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئَلًا

WA LĀ TAQĀFU MĀ LAYSA LAKA BIHI ʿILM  
ʾINNA-S-SAMʿA WA-L-BAṢARA WA-L-FUʾĀD  
KULLU ʾULĀĀʾIKA KĀNA ʿANHU MASʾULĀ

*Follow not after that of which you have  
no knowledge.*

*Truly*

*— the hearing and the sight and the heart —  
each of them will be questioned*

{17:36}

Possessors of such light call to Allāh by their entire being. Even their silence {*ṣamt*} is a call to Allāh; their innermost self {*sirr*} is a call to Allāh; their sitting {*julūs*} is a call to Allāh; their actions are a call to Allāh; for if their words are a call to Allāh so too is everything about them a call to Allāh.

Those who respond quickly to them do so in accord with the degree of goodness within their hearts {*qulūb*} and in accord with the amount of faith {*īmān*} in their hearts {*afīda*}. Those who distance themselves {*nāʿa*} from them have no share {*naṣīb*} of goodness in their hearts and those who wage war {*ḥarab*} upon them are those who deserve {*ḥaqqat*} grievous and terrible suffering {*al-ʿadhāb*}.

Thus was ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan ordered to Call to Allāh and as soon as he entered into Tūnis there gathered around him men of excellent virtue and merit {*al-faḍāʾil*}. They included among them the Shuyukh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ʾIbn Maḳhlūf aṣ-Ṣaqqalī, ʾAbū ʿAbdu-llāh aṣ-Ṣabūnī, ʾAbū Muḥammad ʿAbdu-l-ʿAzzīz az-Zaytunī, ʾAbū ʿAbdu-llāh al-Bijāʾī al-Khayāṭ and ʾAbū ʿAbdu-llāh al-Jārahī and the pure Shaykh, ʾAbū al-ʿAzzāʾam Mādī, a student of the Shaykh and his attendant {*khādimah*}. Each and every one of this group had their wonders {*karāmāt*} and their particular taste {*dhawq*}.

The number of his murīdūn increased and became more numerous day by day. This caused jealousy to invade the heart of one of the Religious Magistrates {*al-quḍāh*} of Tūnis who was called Bīn Barāʾ. The more people gathered around Abū-l-Ḥasan the more jealousy {*al-ghayra*} flared up in the heart of Bīn Barāʾ until it consumed him. When he could no longer bear it he began to wage war on our Shaykh, may Allāh be content with him and preserve his secret.

Bīn Barāʾ had studied religious law {*fiqh*} and imagined himself to be the “Judge of Everyone” {*qāḍī al-jamāʿah*} due to his studies. He pretended to leadership {*az-zāʿim*} by the way of jealousy {*ghayrah*} and strife {*nuzūʾ*}, relishing his assumed position in the religious community. In reality he was more worldly {*dunyawī*} than religious {*dīniyah*}. His position of leadership was largely imaginary and based upon his ‘official’ position as a magistrate. When he saw the people gathering around Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan he imagined that he was usurping his leadership over the people {*az-zāmatu-sh-shaʿabiyah*}.

As Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan was from the scholars {*ʿulamāʾ*} of Religious Law and Qurʾānic Commentary {*tafsīr*} and the Oral Traditions {*al-ḥadīth*} and was a qualified judge, Bīn Barāʾ felt that there was no obstacle between himself and the Shaykh that would prevent the Shaykh from taking over his position. Bīn Barāʾ was finally overcome by his own shayṭānic whisperings {*al-waswāsa*}; seduced by the lower self {*an-nafs al-ʾamārah*} he seduced himself into waging war on ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan.

This war was not at all waged with honour {*sharaf*}. When Bīn Barāʾ found that he was unable to best ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan in the field of knowledge he began to intrigue against him with the Sulṭān by casting ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan in the role of a dangerous popular leader {*zaʿīman shaʿbīan khaṭīran*}.

He told the Sulṭān, “A man has come from Shādhilah; a donkey thief who pretends to be from the household of the Prophet {*āhlu-l-bayt*}, and a great crowd of people have gathered around him claiming that he is a Fāṭimī <sup>12</sup>. {a direct descendant of Sayyidah Fāṭimah, Allāh grant her peace, the daughter of the Prophet, Blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and the wife of Sayyidina ʿAlī, Allāh honour his presence}, and he is stirring up {*yushawwish*} your land against you.” <sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This was only 75 years after the downfall of the Fāṭimiyyūn in North Africa and there were still many pockets of popular support due to the love of the people for āhlu-l-bayt {Allāh bless and preserve it now and forever}.



To the Sultān, ʿAbū Zakariyyah, this meant his kingdom was in danger and it is this idea of “danger to the kingdom” {*al-mulku fī khaṭar*} that always inflames rulers, who can be counted on to do whatever is necessary in order to save and preserve their kingdom. The Sultān, however, did not wish to be precipitous and wanted first to ascertain for himself the truth of the matter before passing judgement.

The author of *Durrat al-ʿAsrār* relates,

“At that time ʿAbū Zakariyyah, may Allāh grant him mercy, was Sultān. Bin Barāʾ gathered a number of religious scholars {*al-fuqahāʾ*} in the palace. The Sultān was seated behind a screen {*hijāb*} and the Shaykh, Allāh be content with him, entered. They then proceeded to discuss all branches of learning and he silenced them with his wide knowledge whilst the Sultān listened. They were unable to refute him in the field of revealed knowledge {*al-ʿulumu-l-mawhūbah*} and the Shaykh completely mastered them in the field of acquired knowledge {*al-ʿulumu-l-muktasabah*}. His words were inspired and the Sultān heard him speak in the manner that was to prompt the Shaykh the ʿImam, ʿIzzu-d-Dīn to say years later, on the night before the Battle of Manṣūrah, “Heard you those extraordinary words so recently [sprung] from Allāh?”

As the Sultān listened to ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan he was astonished. He saw in ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan a venerable shaykh {*shaykhān muhibān*} even though he was still a young man {*sinnu-l-futūwah*}.<sup>13</sup> The Sultān sensed maturity {*nuḍjā*} in both his knowledge and his thinking, spirituality {*rūḥāniyyah*} in his words and the clear transparency {*shāfʿiyyah*} of his spiritual insight {*baṣirah*}, all of which led him to say to Bin Barāʾ,

“This is a man from among the greatest ʿawliyāʾ. You can not match {*tāqah*} him.”

Immediately Bin Barāʾ began speaking about ‘the kingdom’ and ‘the throne’ and ‘my great personal loyalty to your majesty and your rule’ saying, “By Allāh, if this man leaves now all the people of Tūnis will storm your palace and drive you from it. Even now they are at your gates.”

The words of Bin Barāʾ had an immediate effect on the Sultān, who announced to the gathered scholars that they should depart, but ordered the Shaykh to sit down in his palace and not take his leave with the others.

The Shaykh calmly {*hādīʾān*} sat down, at peace with himself {*sākinatu-naḥs*}. He requested water and a prayer carpet {*sujādah*} be brought and, on their arrival, proceeded to make his ablutions {*wuḍūʾ*} and entered into the prayer. After the ṣalāh was complete he prepared to offer his supplication {*duʿāʾ*} and was about to ask Allāh to punish the Sultān when he received an inward message {*ʿilhamah*} of Allah.

“Truly Allāh does not consent for you to seek grief {*jazaʿ*} for any one of His creatures.”

Simultaneously he was inspired by Allāh to offer the following supplication:

“Oh You whose throne is wider than the heaven and the earth, the preservation of which is no burden, the Most-Sublime, The All-Mighty {2:256}, I ask you for faith in Your care, a faith by which my heart will remain undisturbed from anxiety for sustenance and fear of creatures. Draw me near to You in a way that tears the veils as You did with ʿIbrāhīm, Your Friend and Messenger, who spoke to You and thereby did not need the help of Your Angel Jibril, peace be upon both of them. He did not even need to ask You. You kept him safe from the fire of his enemy. How can anyone be in need of a veil to shroud him from the harm of his enemies when You have made him not to be in need of the help of Friends. I pray that You will conceal me in Your Nearness until I cannot see or feel the nearness or farness of any other thing. “Truly You have Power over all things.” {2:20}

<sup>13</sup> He was at that time in his late thirties.

Years later these inspired words became a part of the Litany or Orison of the Earth {Ḥizb al-Barr}.<sup>14</sup> In them we can see the state of our Shaykh as he sought shelter {*lajaʿa*} in his Master {*mawlāhu*} asking for acceptance and nearness {*ṭaliban ar-riḍā wa-l-qurb*} that he might be enshrouded with nearness in nearness {*bi-l-qurb fi-l-qurb*}. As he was immersed {*mustaghḥariq*} in his supplications {*adʿiyāʿ*} and affliction {*ibtilāʿ*} the Divine Destiny {*al-maqādir*} was already arranging the matter in an ‘unexpected’ fashion

Now the Sultān had a slave girl {*jāriyah*} who was very dear to him. Simultaneously with the Shaykh being detained she felt a sharp sudden pain, cried out for help and fell down dead. This was her moment of fate {*al-ʿaqdār*}. The life decreed for her came to an end in that instant. Of this there can be no doubt.

Equally there can be no doubt that the Shaykh had been ordered to remain at the palace and not to go out. Her death was her destiny and yet her death was also an infliction of punishment {*ʿiqāb*} upon the Sultān for arresting {*manaʿahu*} the Shaykh and preventing his departure.

Is this a karāmah<sup>15</sup>? And if it is, then what is karāmah other than the arrangement of destiny {*tartīb maqādir*} or can destiny be changed? Or re-arranged in some other way? Are there any accidents {*muṣādafāt*} in this world? Is there anything in the universe {*al-kawn*} that is coincidental {*ʿittifāq*} or random {*ʿitibātan*}?

Allah has stated in Qurʾān, “*Truly we have created every thing by decree.*” {54:49} ..

The woman’s life came to an end. She died instantly. The Sultān grieved and ordered her body washed {*ghusl*} and shrouded and carried out for the funeral prayer. Whilst the attendants were busy with this they forgot that they had left a brazier {*mijmara*} burning in the palace. All of this was ‘co-incident’ with the Shaykh entering into his prayers in the jail that was a palace. Another arrangement of destiny.

Ibn Sabbagh, the author of *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*, writes, “They forgot the burning brazier. Fire blazed up without their being aware of it until the bedding, the clothes and everything else was burned up .

On the outskirts of Tūnis, amongst the gardens, lived one ʿAbū ʿabdu-Llāh al-Liḥyānī, the brother of the Sultān. When, from his garden, he saw smoke over the city, he sent to find the cause. Upon being told that the palace was in flames he had his horse saddled and rushed straight away to the palace where he found his brother, the Sultān, in great grief and trepidation; grief on account of the loss of one of his beloveds and the loss of his quarters and trepidation over his arrest of our Shaykh. In his mind the two things had become connected through the Qadar of Allāh. He now knew full well the meaning of the āyāt:

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

INNĀ KULLA ShAYʿIN KḥALAQĀNĀHU BI-QADAR

*Truly we have created every thing by decree*  
{54:49}

This ʿAbū ʿAbdu-Llāh al-Liḥyānī was a frequent visitor of our Shaykh. When he had heard the whole story he said to his brother the Sultān, “What is this situation into which Ibn Barāʿ has dragged you? He has caused you to fall, by Allāh, into ruin, you and those with you,” whereupon he went in to our Shaykh who was still in

<sup>14</sup> *Orisons*, Volume One of *al-Madrasatu-sh-ShĀdḥDḥuliyyah* pp67-68

<sup>15</sup> Karamah = supernatural occurrence. A discussion of the relationship between these supernatural events {*karāmah*} associated with the ʿawliyāʿ and miracles {*muʿjizah*} associated with prophets and messengers {peace and blessings be upon them all} is to be found in the last chapter of Book One, Volume Two, {An End and a Confession}

detention in another part of the palace and said to him “Yā Sīdī, my brother is without knowledge of your spiritual reality. It was not his fault but that of Bin Barāʾ, who got him into this.” Our Shaykh replied, “By Allāh! Your brother does not possess authority over good or evil, death or life, or the raising of the dead with respect to himself. How then does he possess authority over them with respect to others?”

The Shaykh left and returned to his house that same day and resumed his tasks of guidance {*irshād*}, counsel {*naṣaḥa*} and teaching {*tadrīs*}.

Bin Barāʾ however did not cease in his efforts to harm the Shaykh. That was due to his inherent nature. The Shaykh always used to greet him whenever they met in the spirit of forgiveness but Bin Barāʾ never returned his greeting. However when ʾAbū ʿabdu-llāh bin ʾAbī-l-Ḥusayn, chamberlain of the Sultān, saw the Shaykh he got down from his mule and began to kiss his hands, weeping and asking for his supplications {*duʿāʾ*}, which the Shaykh offered to Allāh.

When the Shaykh entered his house he said, “I have just received a message concerning these two men. I was told, “Yā ʿAlī. The marking {*wasm*} of a slave with ill fortune is according to the will of Allāh. He is blind to this marking even though he be learned. Likewise the marking of a person with good fortune {*yawfiq*} is according to the knowledge of Allāh and it comes to him do what he may.”<sup>16</sup>

In time the Shaykh decided to depart Tūnis to go on pilgrimage {*al-ḥajj*}. He also decided that he wanted to spend some time in Miṣr {Egypt} prior to departing to the Holy Lands {*ad-diyāru-l-muqadasah*}, so he ordered his companions to prepare for the journey.

As the riders started to move, the people of Tūnis went out to bid them farewell. There was much movement {*ḥarakah*} and clamour {*dajjijā*}. The entire population of Tūnis was aware of the departure {*rāḥal*} of Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan. The Sultān also knew and imagined {*dḥana*} that ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan was leaving Tūnis forever. This caused him to be so terrified {*ruʿab*} in his heart that he ran out and begged the Shaykh to return. The Shaykh said, “I am leaving for Ḥajj, and if Allāh fulfills my need {*qadā-llāhu ḥājjaṭi*} and I complete the Ḥajj, I shall return ʾinshaʾllāh {if Allāh wills}.”

The author of *Durrat al-ʾAsrār* relates the following, which he heard from the pure Shaykh, ʾAbū al-ʾAzzāʾam Mādī, a student of the Shaykh and his personal attendant {*kḥadimah*}.

“After we had journeyed to the East {*ash-sharq*} and entered al-ʾIskandriyyah, Bin Barāʾ had a sworn writtern legal attestation {*aqdan bi-shahādah*} made out which stated, “A man who is coming to you has stirred up trouble {*shawash*} in our country and will do likewise in your land.” Due to this the Sultān of Miṣr ordered that Sīdī ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan be held in al-ʾIskandriyyah.

“We remained there some days.

“The Sultān had imposed a tax on some of the leaders {*ʾashyākh*} of the country who were called the Qabāʾil {the tribes = *badūw*}, and when they heard of the Shaykh they came to him and petitioned him to make supplication {*duʿāʾ*} for them. He said, ‘Tomorrow, if Allāh wills, we shall depart for al-Qāhirah {Cairo} and we shall speak for you with the Sultān.’

<sup>16</sup> ʿAbū-l-ʿAzāʾim, the khadīm of the Shaykh, said, “The Shaykh did not pray against him and never mentioned him until we reached ʿArafat when he said, ‘Say Amīn’ to my prayer for now I am commanded to pray against Bin Barāʾ’. He prayed thusly, ‘Oh Allāh, lengthen his life, make his knowledge to be of no use to him, cause him trials through his children and make him, at the end of his life, to be a slave of oppression.’” *Durrat al-ʾAsrār*.

“So we travelled and departed from al-ʿIskandriyyah by the Gate of the Lotus {*Bāb as-Sidrah*} and the soldiers {*al-junādah*} and the governor {*al-wālī*} were present. No one was entering or going out without their being examined but we passed through and no one spoke to us and no one knew us.

“When we arrived in al-Qāhirah we went to the Citadel {*al-qalʿah*} and requested an audience with the Sultān. He said, “How can this be? It is our order that he be held in al-ʿIskandariyyah.” He was then brought in before the Sultān, the judges {*al-quḍāh*} and the princes {*al-ʿumarāʾ*} and sat down amongst them whilst we watched.

“The Sultān said, ‘Oh Shaykh, what have you to say?’

“He said, ‘I have come to intercede {*ʿashfʿa*} on the part of the Qabāʿil.’

The Sultān replied, “Intercede on your own behalf. This is a warrant sworn out against you by Bin Barāʾ of Tūnis with his seal upon it,” whereupon he handed it to the Shaykh.

“The Shaykh replied, ‘You and I and the Qabāʿil are all in the grip {*qabḍah*} of Allāh.’ and he rose [to leave]. When he had gone about twenty paces the courtiers shook the Sultān, for neither had he moved nor did he utter a sound; rather he remained completely motionless and silent.

The courtiers made quickly for the Shaykh and began to kiss his hands {*jaʿalū yaqbalūn yadihi*} and begged him to return. So he returned and shook {the Sultān} with his hand until he began to move, whereupon he descended from his throne begging pardon of {the Shaykh} and asking him to make duʿāʾ for him.

The Sultān immediately wrote to the Governor of al-ʿIskandariyyah and asked him to remove the taxes from the Qabāʿil and to restore all that had been taken from them.

We remained for some days with him in the Citadel and the lands of Miṣr were shaken {*ihṭazat*} by us until we set off for the Ḥajj, after which we returned to Tūnis.”<sup>17</sup>

So the Shaykh returned to Tūnis and remained there for some time guiding and calling the people to Allāh. During this time the agitation {*thawrah*} of Bin Barāʾ never ceased. On the contrary it increased to the degree that the lights of the Shaykh and the number of his followers increased.

It was at that time that the Shaykh met the Friend of Allāh, ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, of whom the Shaykh said as he looked into his face at their first meeting; “Certainly no one has brought me back to Tūnis except this young man.” He raised him, instructed him in the Sūfī Way and travelled with him to the East.

The ‘young man’ stayed with him from that first meeting until our Shaykh died and he in turn became the Shaykh, for it was he who was to be his successor {*kḥalīfah*}. The Shaykh carried on in Tūnis and did not bother with the intrigues of Bin Barāʾ, as he knew his stay in Tūnis would only be temporary, as had been foretold long before by his Shaykh, Sīdī Ibn Maṣṣīṣ, may Allāh sanctify their secret.

He remained until he received the ʿidḥn to travel, for it was not possible to travel without the permission from Allāh. Finally the permission came, as he relates, may Allāh be content with him,

“I saw the Prophet of Allāh, blessing and peace be upon him, in a dream and he said to me, “Oh ʿAlī, depart hence to Miṣr and raise up there forty honest ones {*ṣiddīqān*}.”

It was in the season of summer and intense heat and I said, ‘Oh Sīdī Rasūl Allāh, the heat is intense.’ and he replied to me saying, ‘Lo, the clouds shall overshadow you.’

<sup>17</sup> *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*: pp31-32



Then I said, 'I fear thirst,' and he replied to me saying, 'Lo the sky will rain upon you every day', and he promised me seventy karāmah on the way."

Thus our Shaykh and his murīdūn set off for the land of Miṣr. Among those who accompanied him was Shaykh ʿAbū ʿAlī as-Sammāt.

The author of *Durrat al-ʿAṣrār* relates, "My father told me, 'The worthy Shaykh and reciter of Qurʾān, ʿAbū ʿAbdu-llāh an-Nāsikh told the following story to me, 'I travelled together with these two {Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan and Shaykh ʿAbū Alī}. I was in the service of Shaykh ʿAbū ʿAlī. Upon our arrival in Tarābalus {present day Tripoli} the Shaykh {Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhīdī} said, "Come, let us travel along the interior road," but my teacher ʿAbū ʿAlī chose the coast road."

"He {al-Nāsikh} continued, "Shaykh ʿAbū ʿAlī saw the Prophet of Allāh, blessing and peace be upon him, who said to him, "Oh Abū ʿAlī, you are a friend of Allāh and Abū-l-Ḥasan is a friend of Allāh and Allāh will never set one walī against another walī. So proceed along the way you have chosen and let him proceed on the way he has chosen.' Thus we went our separate ways until we came together in the road near to al-ʿIskandariyyah.

"When we had performed the morning prayers the Shaykh ʿAbū ʿAlī made his way to the tent of Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan and we accompanied him. He entered into his presence, sat down and behaved towards him in a way which was not usual for him. He conversed with him in a speech of which we understood not a word. When he wished to depart he said, "Yā Sīdī, extend your hand that I might kiss it.' and so he kissed his hand and departed weeping.

"We were amazed.

"When he was well on his way again he turned to his companions and said, "Last night I saw the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, who said to me, "Yā Yūnus, ʿAbū-l-Ḥajjāj al-Uqsūrī dwelt in the land of Miṣr <sup>18</sup> and he was the Quṭb. Last night he died and Allāh caused him to be succeeded by Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhīdī.' So I went to him {Sīdī ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan} and gave my allegiance {*ahd*} to him as one who possessed the rank of the Quṭb."

"When we reached al-ʿIskandariyyah and the people came out to meet the caravan, I saw ʿAbū ʿAlī hitting his saddle with his hand, saying, whilst he wept, 'Oh people of this land, if you knew who was coming to you in this caravan you would kiss the feet of his camel which, by Allāh, has brought you this blessing!'"

ʿAbū ʿAbdu-llāh an-Nāsikh told another story,

"I was walking behind ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan who was riding in a *hawdaj* {an enclosed riding litter atop a camel} and I saw two men walking in the shadow of the hawdaj. One of them said to the other, Oh fulān {generic name for anyone} I saw fulān treating you impolitely and yet you were polite with him.' He replied, 'He was from, my country and so I shall say as the poet said,

Majnūn saw a dog in the desert to whom he was kind.

The people censured him, saying, 'Why were you kind to that dog ?'

He said, 'Don't blame me, for I have seen that very dog in the neighbourhood of my beloved Laylā.'

<sup>18</sup> Shaykh Yūsuf ʿAbū-l-Ḥajjāj of Luxor in Upper Egypt

The Shaykh extended his hand from the hawdaj and said, 'Repeat what you have said, oh my son.' And the man repeated his words, whereupon the Shaykh became animated in his litter and began repeating over and over again the phrase,

'Don't blame me, for I have seen that very dog in the neighbourhood of my beloved Laylā' —

'Don't blame me, for I have seen that very dog in the neighbourhood of my beloved Laylā' —

'Don't blame me, for I have seen that very dog in the neighbourhood of my beloved Laylā' —

until he threw out from the hawdaj a dark red robe saying, 'Take this and put it on, for you are more worthy of it than I. May Allāh reward you, oh my son, with good according to the worth of your covenant {*ahd*}.'

"Immediately I said to him, 'Let *me* have it.' and I took it and embraced it and immediately began counting out a large sum of money and offered it to him, whereupon he said to me, 'By Allāh, I did not walk in his shade other than that Allāh might give me the mercy of hearing the dhikr of the Shaykh. I know that mercy is poured out upon him; perhaps some of it may fall on me.'"

Our Shaykh, Sidī ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan asḥ-ShĀDḥDḥULĪ, may Allāh sanctify his secret, said, "When I drew near to the land of Miṣr I was told, 'Yā ʿAlī, the days of trial are finished and the days of felicity have arrived and thus has difficulty been succeeded by ease. Ten for ten just as it was for your great grandfather.'<sup>19</sup> ..

"His dwelling in al-ʿIskandariyyah was in one of the towers in the sea wall which the Sultān had bequeathed to him and to his children. I entered it in the year 715 after the Migration and found in the lower story a large water cistern and place for tying the animals. In the middle floors were dwelling places for the fuqarāʾ and in the upper stories he dwelt with his family. He was married there and his children were born within the tower. He dwelt there for years; one year he would make Ḥajj and the next year he would stay home."

"Among his children were Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad, ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī and also ʿAbū ʿAbdu-Llāh Muḥammad Sharaf ad-Dīn, who I met in Damanhūr where he lived.

Among his daughters was Zaynab, who had children, some of whom I have seen, and ʿArīfat al-Kḥayr, also called al-Wajihah {the noble lady}, whom I met in al-ʿIskandariyyah. At the time I met her she was blind. I asked her why she had two names and she replied, 'When I was born my father was in al-Qāhirah and he wrote to my mother saying, 'I was praying whilst I was in retreat {*kḥilwah*} and I was told that a daughter had been born to me and I was commanded to call her ʿArīfat al-Kḥayr.' When he reached al-ʿIskandariyyah he asked of my mother, 'Where is the daughter that has been born to me?' My mother lifted me up to him and he placed me on his chest and put some of his saliva into my mouth and said, 'Welcome al-Wajihah.' which is to say 'Welcome to the one of whom I learned whilst facing Him {*tawajjahu*}.' She was one of the Friends of Allāh, one of those after whom the Qurʾān was recited in sevenths from behind a screen {*min kḥalfa satar*}<sup>20</sup>, a gracious lady."<sup>21</sup>

He described something of his life in al-ʿIskandariyyah in a letter to a murīd.

<sup>19</sup> Sayyidinā Muḥammad, blessing of Allāh and peace be upon him. This is both a reference to the last ten years the Messenger spent in Madinah al-Munawwarah after the years of oppression in Makkah al-Mukarramah and to Sūratu-l-ʿInshirāḥ {94:5-6}.

<sup>20</sup> In the tradition of Sayyidah ʿAʿishā and Sayyidah Nāfisah, may Allāh be pleased with them.

<sup>21</sup> *Durrat al-ʿAsrār* p 50

“This letter is sent to you from al-ʾIskandariyyah, may Allāh preserve it. We are moving in the shower of Allāh’s benefactions. He endows us with this bliss {*niʿmah*} and manifests upon us His Love {*ḥubb*}. He has covered me and my beloved with His Blessings and has chosen us to be near to Him.

“How gracious He is. We ask Him and He responds and even before we have asked, He has given. Abundant praise be to Him as becomes His Nobility and Sublimity.

“As for the family, relatives and other beloveds they have all been endowed with the abundant generosity of Allāh and covered with kindness inwardly and outwardly; they are overwhelmed. We pray for the abundance of Allāh and all around increase for you and for them, one and all, and we ask Him to take our place in thanking Himself, for He is the most Generous of the Generous. May He grant you refuge and protect you.”

Miṣr at the time was filled with the most noble hearted and high minded scholars {*min ʾakramu-l-ʿulamāʾ*}, who were capacious in their knowledge, spiritual truth and piety. A group of men who had devoted their lives to Allāh and in turn had been guided by Allāh who had caused love {*maḥabah*} and respect {*ḥaybah*} for them to grow in the hearts of the people.

This group met ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan with graciousness and accompanied him as companions, brothers and murīdūn. The author of *al-Mafākhir al-ʿAlīyyah* quoted Ibn Maghayzal,

“When the Shaykh came to Miṣr from the West {*al-maghrib*} he began to call people {*al-khalq*} to Allāh, the Most High. The inhabitants of East and West without exception {*qāṭibatan*} responded to his call. Present at his *majlis* {gathering} were the great ʿulamāʾ from among the inhabitants of Miṣr such as Sīdī ash-Shaykh ʿIzzu-d-Dīn bin ʿabd as-Salām, Shaykh Taqī ad-Dīn Ibn Daqīq al-ʿAyd, Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʾAḍīm al-Mundarī, Ibn Ṣāliḥ, Ibn al-Ḥājib, ash-Shaykh Jamāl ad-Dīn ʾAṣfūr, ash-Shaykh Nabīh ad-Dīn Ibn ʿAuf. These men were among the leading religious scholars of that time from both East and West {*sharqan wa gharban*}. Also, there was ash-Shaykh Muḥiyu-d-Dīn Ibn Saraqah and the scholar Yā Sīn, students of Ibn al-ʿArabī, may Allāh be content with him. They were all present at his table in the Madrasah al-Kāmilīyyah in al-Qahira with the highest politeness {*bi-l-āzmīnu-l-ʿadab*} as students between his hands {*mutalmadhīn bayna yadhi*}.

“The Shaykh, al-ʾImām, the Supreme Qadī, Badr ad-Dīn Ibn Jamāʿat al-Walī Ibn al-Walī Ibn ʾal-Walī, may Allāh be mercy full to them all, who was the son of a walī, the grandson of a walī and the great-grandson of a walī used always to say that he shared in the considered opinion {*raʾyāhū*} of all of Miṣr in the *barakah* {grace} of Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhīdī. He was proud to be his companion and to be present at his death prayers {*aṣ-salātu janāzah*} in Ḥumaythīrah.”<sup>22</sup>

The author of *Durrat al-Asrār* relates that, “The esteemed Shaykh ʾAbū-l-ʿAẓīm Mādī told me,

“Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan spoke on the real significance of the Ṣūfī shaykh in his dealings with his companions {*ʾashābahu*}. He said that his hand was upon them {*yadahu ʿalayhim*} protecting them wherever they might be. I disagreed with that in my self {*nafsi*} and said to my self ‘That cannot be except by Allāh ʿaza wa jalla.’

“When morning came I was very uptight in my self {*ḍaiqah shadīd fi-nafsi*} and I went outside of al-ʾIskandariyyah and sat on the beach {*sāḥal*} the whole day. After I made the afternoon ṣalāh {*al-ʿaṣr*} I put my head under my collar {*tawqī*}. Something shook me and I thought it was one of the fuqarāʾ who was playing

<sup>22</sup> *al-Mafākhir al-ʿAlīyah* p 15

around with me {*maḥzanī*}. I raised my head from under my collar and there before me was a handsomely dressed and very beautiful woman. I asked her, 'What do you want.' and she replied 'I want you!' I said 'I take refuge with Allāh' {2:67}. She said, 'By Allāh, I shall not leave you!' I pushed her away from me. She then pulled me to her breast and played with me as a child plays with a canary and I lost control of my self. She drew me between her thighs {*bayna fakḥdihā*}.

"Suddenly a hand grabbed hold of my collar and I heard the Shaykh saying, "Yā Mādī! What is it that you are falling into?" and he hurled me off her. I thought that somehow the Shaykh had passed by where I was but when I raised my head there was neither the Shaykh nor the woman. I marveled {*fataʿajibat*} at this, realizing that I had been rejecting or contemptuous {*bi-aʿatirāda*} of the Shaykh.

"I asked pardon of Allāh and performed my evening ṣalāh {*al-maghrib*} and made for the Green Gate {*al-babil-ʾakḥḍar*} but found it and all the gates of the city closed. When I came near {*danu*} to it the Gate opened of its own accord and I entered the city — then it closed. This gate is only opened after the Friday ṣalāh {*ṣalātu-l-jumuʿah*} when the ʾAmīr and the people pass through it out on to the beach after which it is closed.

"I reached the tower {*al-qalah*} and entered my quarters and hid myself from the fuqarāʾ. After the Shaykh had finished the night ṣalāh {*al-ʾishāʾ*} he sent the people away. Every night he gathered to himself the people of the city who came to listen to his words. When they had assembled he asked 'Where is Mādī?' They said, 'We have not seen him today.' He said, 'Look for him in his quarters.' They found me but I said 'I am sick {*marīḍ*}', for I had entered into a very intense state {*ḥāl ʿaḍḥīm*}. He said, 'Carry him between you.'

"So they carried me and brought me into his presence — and then he ordered them to go away.

"I sat before him weeping and he said to me, "Oh Mādī, yesterday when I said to you such and such you opposed and resisted {*ʾitiradat*} me. Where was my hand with regard to you on this day when you desired to rebel? Whoever is incapable of doing this is not a Shaykh."

As we related earlier, he would spend one year at home and the next on pilgrimage {*al-ḥajj*}. The author of *Durrat al-Asrār* relates, "One in whom I trust told me the following:

"One year in which he went on ḥajj there took place the movement of the Tartars against the people of Miṣr and the Sulṭān was occupied with operations against them so that he did not prepare the military escort for the caravan of pilgrims. The Shaykh sent out his tent to al-Birkah and certain people followed him.

"The people gathered together with the Prince of the ʿUlamāʾ, al-ʾIzz bin ʿAbdu-s-Salām, and questioned him about the journey. He replied, 'The journey without an escort is not allowable.' The people informed the Shaykh, who said, 'Let me meet with him.'

"He met him in the Masjid on Yawm al Jumuʿah {Friday} and a large crowd gathered around the two of them. He said, "Yā Faqīh, is it your opinion {*raʾy*} that if a man had the whole world reduced to the size of one single step that he would be granted permission to take a journey amidst dangers or not?" The judge said, "If anyone should find himself in such circumstances he would be beyond the limits of legal judgement {*fatwā*} or anything of the sort."

"The Shaykh said to him, "By Allāh, other than whom there is no other deity, I am of those for whom the whole earth has been made into the size of a single step. Whenever I see something which causes men to fear I walk with them to the place of security. And for you and me there is no escape from standing before Allāh [on the Day of Judgement] so that he may question me concerning the truth of what I have just told you."



“So the Shaykh departed and many wonders {*karāmāt*} attended him along his way. Among them is that when bandits would attack the caravan by night they would find a wall built around the caravan as if it were a city. At the break of day the brigands would come to him, tell him their past deeds, repent to Allāh and accompany him on the Ḥajj to Makkah. When he completed the Ḥajj, he returned to Miṣr and entered al-Qahirah at the head of the people.

“The Jurist ‘Izzu-d-Dīn went out to meet him at al-Birkah which is about six miles outside of al-Qāhirah. The Shaykh said to him, “{Yā Faqih, by Allāh, were it not for the training I received with my great-grandfather the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, I would have taken the caravan out on the day of ‘Arafāt<sup>23</sup> and in one step been at ‘Arafāt.”} The muftī said, “I believe in Allāh.” Whereupon the Shaykh said to him, “Look upon the truth {*ḥaqīqah*} of it.” And everyone turned and before [their eyes] they beheld the Ka‘bah.

“The people cried out and the faqih put his head in his hands, saying, “You are my Shaykh from this very morn,” and the Shaykh said to him, “Rather, you are my brother, if Allāh wills {*‘inshā‘allāh*}.”

Shaykh Mādī told us the following two stories which may serve as indications of how the Shaykh used the Pilgrimage as a means for instructing his companions and students:

“One year I made Ḥajj without his permission {*bidūn ‘idhnahu*}. When I had completed the rites of pilgrimage {*manāsiku-l-ḥajj*} and came to the Farewell Circulambulation {*‘iṭūfu-l-widā‘*}, the people of Makkah rose up against those remaining in the ḥaram and plundered them. {*fa-nahabahum*}.

“I had things given into my safe keeping so I entered into the ḥijr and stood beneath the mizāb.<sup>24</sup> I said [to myself] ‘If I go out I shall be plundered and if I continue to sit here I sit without those things entrusted to me by the people.’

“I felt helpless and confused {*fa-taḥayrat*} and I called upon {*fa-nādayt*} the Shaykh and as I called him he appeared standing at Bab Nadwah<sup>25</sup> signaling me. I ran to him but he turned away. I followed after him but was unable to reach him until I came to the caravan {*ar-rakb*}. I joined the caravan and searched for him but I did not find him.

“When I entered Miṣr I went to him and greeted him and he questioned me as to my condition {*ḥālī*} saying to me, ‘Oh Mādī, when your condition became critical for you and you summoned us we came to you and we delivered you {*kḥalasnāka*} from what you got yourself into.’”

Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan said, “If anyone is separated from the ordering of his own affairs {*tadbīr*} and placed under the orders of Allāh; removed from his own choosing {*‘ikhtiyār*} and consigned to the choice of Allāh; divided from his own discernment {*naḍḥar*} and placed within the discernment of Allāh or cut off from knowledge of his own affairs in favour of the knowledge {*‘ilm*} of Allāh, whilst maintaining uninterrupted resignation, contentment, commitment and complete trust in Allāh — then to that one Allāh will bestow a

<sup>23</sup> The day one must be on the Plain of ‘Arafat around the Mountain of Mercy {*Jabal ar-Raḥmah*} in order for the Ḥajj to be acceptable to Allāh.

<sup>24</sup> al-ḥijr = the crescent shaped enclosure between the Syrian and the Maghribi Corner of the Ka‘bah beneath which the Prophet ‘Isma‘il and his mother Sayyidah Hajjar {peace be upon them} are buried. al-mizāb = the golden water spout centred directly above the ḥijr which drains the roof of the Ka‘bah. See frontispiece of *Orisons*, Volume One of al-Madrasatu-sh-Shādhīdīyah

<sup>25</sup> bab al-nadwah = one of the gates of the Sacred Enclosure. In jahaliyyah days {the time of ignorance prior to the mission of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him} this ‘Gate’ was assigned to the *Nadwah* who were one of the six clans of Quraysh that maintained the Ka‘bah and pilgrim services. This clan was responsible for organizing and directing all convocations. The other clans were: *Ḥijābah* or those who cared for the cloth in which the Ka‘bah was draped and the keys; *Siqāyah* or those responsible for watering the pilgrims; *Rifādah* or those responsible for feeding the pilgrims; *Qiyādah* or those responsible for leading the fighters; *Liwā* or those responsible for the flag and banners.

beneficence of mind and heart {*husnu-l-lubb*} which will result in remembrance {*dhikr*}, reflection {*fikr*} and many other special virtues besides these.”

Shaykh Māḍī also related that, “One year I went on Ḥajj with him and upon reaching Madinah he stood before the door of the masjid of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, seeking permission {*yaṭlubu-l-ʾidhn*} to enter, saying, ‘This is the place regarding which Allāh has said {the meaning of which is}, ‘*Oh you who believe do not enter the houses of the Prophet — unless permission be granted to you.*’ {33:53p}. He stood there until leave was granted him and then he entered and stood before the face {*wajh* = face or presence} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and uncovered his head, saying,

‘The blessings of Allāh, and His Angels and His Messengers and His Prophets and all of His Creatures from amongst the People of His Heavens and His Earth be upon you yā Sidī, yā Rasūl Allāh and all of your companions.’

“He went on repeating this over and over in an exalted state {*hālīn aḍḥīm*} until the state became calm whereupon he sat down in a section of the Ḥaram and said, ‘When I was making Peace upon him I had vision {*kashf*} of him in which whilst I was greeting {*ʾaslam*} him he was returning the greeting with his forefinger.’”

He {Shaykh Māḍī} said, “At that exact instant ʾAbū Muḥammad ʿAbdu-l-ʿAzīz al-Zaytūnī entered. He was the overseer of the food for the fuqarāʾ and he said, ‘Yā Sidī, one of our camels has died and his load remains on the ground.’ Our Shaykh replied, ‘By Allāh yā Sidī, at this moment I have neither gold nor silver.’<sup>26</sup> He ordered him to sit down and sat down with us who were gathered in a circle {*halaqahu*} about him at the time. Then the Shaykh put his head under the collar of his robes.

“When he withdrew his head he said ‘Yā Muḥammad. Put your hand into my pocket and take what is there.’ So he put it and drew it out full of gold and [the Shaykh] said,

“‘Look at that neither struck by a minter nor fashioned by a goldsmith. I was told, ‘Yā ʿAlī. Take from what is in your pocket.’ And he said, ‘Go buy a camel and whatever provisions you need for the fuqarā.’”

Thus was it his practice to make Ḥajj both to fulfil what was ordained and to instruct his murīdūn. As we have mentioned earlier he performed it every other year if possible.

He was accompanied not only by his own students but also by many distinguished personages from East and West with whom he maintained an extensive correspondence, and also members of the inner circles of the spiritual hierarchy, as is testified by this extract from a letter<sup>27</sup> he wrote to Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan as-Saqillī, in which he says,

“...the ship from al-Mahdiyyah has arrived here [in Alexandria] after fifteen days of sailing. We found Aḥmad aṣ-Ṣābūnī on it. He is seriously determined to make the Ḥajj to the Sacred House of Allāh. Though I had looked forward to finding you aboard it was not to be. So we have decided to leave before your arrival.

“I would have waited until next year for your arrival were it not that seventy people have made up their minds to travel with me this year — some of them have even sold their goods in order to do so.

“Over two hundred people — of whom the seventy are the élite — including *fuqahā* and *ʿulemā*ʾ, as well as an undetermined number of *khulafā*ʾ {successors}, *umanā*ʾ {special agents}, *nuqabā*ʾ {directors}, *nujabā*ʾ {camel

<sup>26</sup> *lā ṣafrāʾ wa lā baydāʾ* = literally = neither yellow nor white

<sup>27</sup> *Durrat al-ʾAsrār*

riding nobles} and *abdāl* {substitutes}<sup>28</sup> and others from among the spiritual élite are going with me. I have learned that their origin is in the Yaman and I look forward to the meeting with them. They are urging me on and Allāh calls me as well.”

If the Ḥajj was an important, indeed a vital part of the teaching method of our Shaykh, it was also his last teaching to them. In the year 656 of the Migration during the month of Shawwāl, the Shaykh began making preparations for what was to be his last Ḥajj.

Sidi Mādī related to me,

“When he set out on the Ḥajj during which he passed away, I had married a woman of the people of al-ʿIskandariyyah who, being with child, began to weep and say to me, ‘Are you leaving me to make Ḥajj just when I am at the point of giving birth?’ I informed the Shaykh of what she had said and he said, ‘Call her to me.’ I brought her to him and when I entered with her before him he said to her, ‘O mother of ʿAbdu-l-Dāʾim, leave Mādī to travel with me and I will ask for something better from Allāh for you.’ She said to him, ‘Yā Sidi. I hear and I obey.’ He invoked a blessing on her and she turned away.

While we were on our journey she gave birth to a boy child whom she named ʿAbdu-l-Dāʾim.”

He continued with his telling of the story:

“When we had made preparations for the journey the Shaykh said to me, ‘Bring a pick-axe and shovel, in case one of us should die and burial should be necessary.’ This had never before been his custom in all of my travels with him and was a definite indication {*ʿishārah*} of his death.

“His son, Shaykh Shāraf ad-Dīn, told me in Damanhur in 715 AH, “There was with us a youth who was studying Qurʾān. He was raised up with us as he was an orphan and his mother was part of our household. When my father, the Shaykh, decided to depart he commanded us to move without the women folk and children. The young boy was full of desire to accompany us. The Shaykh said, ‘Take him with *you*.’ His mother came to the Shaykh and said, ‘Yā Sidi, perchance *you* will look after him.’ He said to her, ‘We will look after him, ʿinshāʾllāh, as far as Ḥumaythirah.’

“He continued, ‘We set off and when we entered the desert the Shaykh and the young boy fell ill. The boy died a day’s journey before Ḥumaythirah. We wanted to bury him but he said, ‘Carry him to Ḥumaythirah’. There we halted and washed him and the Shaykh prayed over him, and we buried him there; he was the first to be buried in that place. It was during that same night that the Shaykh died.

“That evening he had assembled his companions and given them final injunctions.

“He especially enjoined upon them the Orison of the Sea {*Hizb al-Bahr*}, <sup>29</sup> saying to them, ‘Teach it to your children, for in it is the greatest name {*ismu-llāhu-l-ʿaḍḥam*} of Allāh.’

“He spoke in private with Sidi Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, gave him his orders and made him to be the especially favoured possessor of blessings {*barakāt*} with which Allāh had favoured him. He said to the people with him,

<sup>28</sup> members of the hidden spital government {*al-ḥukumu-l-baʿtinniyah*} under the direction of the Qutb.

<sup>29</sup> Orisons of the Shādhḍhulī: Volume One of *al-Madrasatu-sh-Shādhḍhulīyyah* pp 11-26

‘When I am dead, look to Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī<sup>30</sup>, for he is the Kḥalīfah to follow me. He will have an exalted station among you. He is one of the doors to Allāh, praise be to Him.’

“In the gloaming between sunset and dusk he said to me, ‘Yā Muḥammad, fill for me a jug with water from the well.’ I said, ‘Yā Sīdī, its water is salty and bitter but the water we have with us is fresh.’

He said, ‘Give me some {from the well}, for my intention is other than what you think.’

So I brought him a jug of water and he drank from it, rinsed his mouth and spat it back into the jug.’

Then he said, ‘Put it back into the well.’ I put it back and the water of the well turned sweet and fresh and became abundant by the permission of Allāh.

“He passed the night in devotions {*mutawajjihā*} and the recitation of dhikr. I could hear him saying ‘Illāhī, Illāhī.’ until when the dawn broke and he was still. Thinking him asleep, we shook him and found him dead, may Allāh have mercy upon him. We called Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, and he washed him. We prayed over him, and we buried him at Ḥumaythīrah.”

This place is in the desert of ʿAydḥāb by a valley upon the road of Ṣaʿīd. I have drunk of its water, I have visited his tomb and I have seen his barakah.

It was the 30th day of Dhū-l-Qaʿda in the Year of the Flight 656, which corresponds to the 28th day of November in the 1,258th year of the Common Era. He was sixty-three years old.

Mercy of Allāh be upon ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan; may Allāh perfume his grave, and Allāh is the best to respond.

Abū ʿIshā ʾIbrāhīm bin ʿAbd ar-Rafīʿ, the complete Shāykh, the distinguished man of law, the preacher and jurist and judge of the congregation in Tūnis told me,

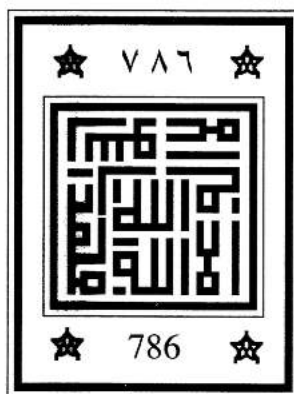
“When Shāykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan set out to perform the pilgrimage on the journey in which he died, he said to his companions, ‘This year I shall perform the Pilgrimage of Substitution {*ḥajjatu-l-niyābah*}.’

He died before completing the ḥajj. When his companions returned to Miṣr they questioned the Muftī ʿIzzu-d-dīn bin ʿAbd as-Salām and told him of what he {the Shāykh} had said. He wept and said to them, ‘The Shāykh was telling you that he was going to die.’ Do you not know that he has instructed you that the angel is the one who will make the ḥajj as his substitute {*niyābah*}. Do you not know of the saying {*ḥadīth*} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, that goes, “If anyone leaves his home for the purpose of performing the pilgrimage and dies before fulfilling the pilgrimage, then Allāh deputizes an angel to take his place in the performance of the pilgrimage each year until the Day of Judgment.”

يَا شَذْلَى  
YĀ ShĀDḥDḥULĪ

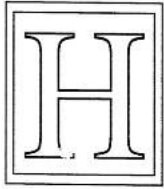
<sup>30</sup> Though the Shāykh had sons, he did not appoint any one of them to be his kḥalīfah {successor}, but chose he whom he considered to be the most suitable. We hope that the modern Shuyūkh follow the same route and not make the Path to Allāh the source of gain to be inherited like real estate. {Dr.AHM}





(pic of Sh N at well)

## HIS PERSONALITY



He is ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-ṢĤĀDĤDĤULĪ bin ʿAlī bin ʿAbdu-LLāh bin ʿAbd al-Jabbār bin Tamīm bin Hurmuz bin Ḥātim bin Qasī bin Yūsuf bin Yūshʿa bin Ward bin Baṭāl bin ʿAlī bin ʾAḥmad bin Muḥammad bin ʿĪsā bin Muḥammad bin Sayyid Ṣḥabāb ʾAḥlī-l-Jannnah {Lord of the Youth of the Garden} grandson of the best of the blameless, ʾAbī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan, son of the Leader of the Faithful ʿAlī ibn ʾAbī Talīb, may Allah be generous to him, and son of Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ the Radiant, beloved daughter of the Prophet of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh

be upon him and peace be upon her.<sup>31</sup>

Sidī Mādī bin Sultān, his devoted disciple {who lived to be over a hundred years old}, described him in this way, “He was tawny coloured {*ādami*}, thin, tall, sparsely bearded, long fingered as though he were from al-Ḥijaz<sup>32</sup>, eloquent {*faṣīḥ*} of tongue and sweet {*adḥab*} of speech.”

It was his wont to beautify himself before entering into the masjid, as the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“He {Allāh} made the whole earth a place of prostration {*masjid*} and [a place of] purity for me.”

From that it was his understanding that where ever one was upon the earth it was pure and fit for prayer and prostration and so consequently Shaykh ʾAbū Ḥasan was always beautifully attired in handsome garments {*ath-thiyābu-l-ḥasanah*}.

Sidī Mādī told me the following,

“One day the Shaykh was discoursing in his majlis on *zuhd* {asceticism}, especially in regards to worldly goods, and among those gathered together was a faqīr dressed in worn out garments. The Shaykh, on the contrary, was as always dressed in very fine looking garments. The faqīr said, ‘How is it that the Shaykh holds forth on asceticism while wearing those, whilst it is I who am really the ascetic?’ The Shaykh said, ‘O you who dispute, your clothing is the cloth of worldly desire {*ragḥbah fi-d-dunyā*} which cries out with the tongue of striving and poverty, whereas our clothing is the cloth of self-restraint {*taʿaffuf*} and wealth {*ghinā*}.’ Whereupon the man stood up before those gathered and said, “By Allāh my heart says the same, and I ask forgiveness of Allāh and turn to him in repentance.’ The Shaykh bade me clothe him with fine garments.”

The same story is also related slightly differently,

“Once a faqīr wearing garments of coarse hair {*shar*} came to the Shaykh as he was finishing a lesson and drew near the Shaykh until he took the hem of the Shaykh’s robes saying, ‘Yā Sidī. Allāh is not to be prayed to when wearing such a fine robe.’ The Shaykh {in turn} took hold of the hair cloth of the faqīr and said, ‘When I pray my garments say, “I am enriched by You and not needful {of worldly goods}”, whereas your robes say, “I am impoverished by You so give me.”’”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Latāʾif al-Minan*

<sup>32</sup> The western geographical region of the Arabian Peninsula bordering the Red Sea in which Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madīnah al-Munawwarra are located.

<sup>33</sup> *Latāʾif al-Minan* p.129

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh as-Sakandarī comments on this, saying, “This was the path of Shaykh ʿAbī-l-ʿAbbās and his Shaykh, ʿAbī-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh be content with them both, and [it was the path] of their companions. They avoided wearing any garment that revealed the secret of the wearer {*sirrul-l-labis*} for they believed whoever dressed in patched or coarse garments without being in need was a pretender {*daʿīy*}.<sup>34</sup>”

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh commented further and said, “The Shaykh is not qualifying {*taqyīd*} the dress of the truly poor, for there is no prohibition {*ḥaraj*} against it as long as the wearer is of the *muḥsinīn* {those who excel in scrupulous piety}.<sup>35</sup>”

مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

MĀ ʿALA-L-MUḤSINĪNA MIN SABĪL

*There is no way against the muḥsinīn.*

{9:91p}

The Shaykh in a letter to Sīdī ʿAlī bin Makhlūf gave further dimension to the subtlety of his understanding. He was writing to Sīdī ʿAlī on the general area of guidance, and specifically, in this section, guidance by and from the light of Allāh, “This [being guided to the light] is manifest with reference to the choicest of men and to the one among them of the keenest perception. By him [Sayyīdīnā Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him], by his light and by his goodness {*tayyib*} everything becomes good. It is an amazing thing when you consider his fondness for fine scent {*tayyib*} given that, on the agreement of all the learned ones, his fragrance is the choicest of all fragrances. So understand and enter into the circle of his knowledge. As it said, ‘By Allāh! He did not eat except for us, he did not drink except for us and he did not marry except for us.’ In like manner he does not adorn himself with scent except for us.

“This then is the source of all good things {*tayib*} and the splendour of every mine and he is the mine of all mines. Therefore take to yourself light from his light, scoop up water from his ocean, drink of his knowledge and *adorn yourself with obedience to him*. Then things will be under control of your hands.”

“One day ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās came into the Shaykh with the intention of eating coarse {*kḥaṣḥuna*} food and wearing coarse {*kḥaṣḥuna*} garments. The Shaykh said to him, “Oh ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās. Know Allāh and eat whatever you like. He who knows Allāh will have nothing against him if he eats blissfully {*hanaʿa*} and drinks delectably {*marāʿa*}. It was never the way of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan to eat crude {*ghuladḥa*} foods nor to drink other than from cool shady waters. He said to ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās, “My son. Cool the water. If you drink other than cold water you will say ‘alḥamdulillāh’<sup>36</sup> but you will say it without feeling. If you drink cool water {*al-māʾ al-bārid*} and say ‘alḥamdulillāh!’, each and every one of your organs will respond to the Benevolence of Allāh {*nīʿamatu-llāh*}.”

“The origin of his saying is found in the story about Sayyīdīnā Mūsā, peace be upon, from the Qurʾān:

<sup>34</sup> The choice of this word {*daʿīy*} is a play on *dāʿiyah* or *dāʿin*, meaning one who calls to Allāh. They are all from the same root, *daʿā*, meaning to call, but one calls attention to himself whereas the other call attention to other than himself, ie: Allāh.

<sup>35</sup> Here again the choice of the root *ḥasuna* which means to be beautiful, to be in a proper state, to be handsome amplifies the meaning of these words in a way that it is impossible through mere translation of this passage, which is a complex play on subtle meanings of words like; poor, patched, beautiful, calling.

<sup>36</sup> *alḥamdulillāh* = Praise Allāh. Prescribed saying when finishing drinking or eating

فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ  
فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

FASAQĀ LAHUMA THUMMA TAWALĀ ʿILA-Dḥ-DḥIL  
FAQĀLA RABBI ʿINNI LI-MĀĀ ʿANZALTA ʿILLAYA MIN KḥAYRIN FAQĪR

*So he drew water for them and then withdrew into the shade <sup>37</sup> and said,  
“Oh my Lord. I have need of whatever good You shall send down upon me.”*  
{28:24}

See how in this ayāt Sayyidīnā Mūsā, peace be upon him, retired to the shade and then thanked Allāh for what he had given to him of ease and comfort.” <sup>38</sup> Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, in clarifying the system of the Shādhḥulī Way, wrote, “Wearing soft garments, eating savoury foods, drinking cooled water is not prohibited by Allāh as long as it is accompanied by thanking Allāh {ash-shukru-li-Llāh}. In accord with Ḥadīth and Qurʾān,”

يَبْنِيْءَ آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ  
وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾  
قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ  
قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ  
كَذَلِكَ نَفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

YĀ BĀNĪ ʿĀDAMA KḥUDḥ ZAYNATAKUM ʿINDA KULLU MASJĪD  
WA KULŪ WA-ShRABU WA LĀ TUSRIFŪ ʿINNAHŪ LĀ YUḤIBŪ-L-MUSRIFĪN  
QUL MAN ḤARAMMA ZĪNATA-LLĀHI-  
L-LATĪ ʿAKḥRAJA LI-ʿIBĀDIHI WA-Ṭ-ṬAYYIBATI MINA-R-RIZQ  
QUL HIYA LI-LADḥĪNA ʿĀĀMANŪ FĪ-L-ḤAYĀTI-D-DUNYĀ KḥĀLISATAŅ  
YAWMA-L-QIYĀMAH KADḥĀLIKA NUFAṢṢILU-L-ĀĀYATI LI-QAWMIY YAʿLAMŪN

*Oh children of Adam, beautify yourselves at every place of prostration;  
and eat and drink but do not be extravagant. Truly He does not love the extravagant.*

*Say: Who has forbidden the beautification which Allāh*

*has brought forth for His slaves and the good things from His providence?*

*Say: On the Day of Judgment these shall be solely for those who have believed  
whilst in this worldly life .*

*Thus do We detail Our Signs for those who have knowledge.*

{7:31-32}

<sup>37</sup> The daughters of Shuʿayb {Jethro}, peace be upon him.

<sup>38</sup> Latāʾif al-Minan



« اللَّهُ الْجَمِيلُ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ »

ALLĀHU-L-JAMĪLU YUḤIBU-L-JAMĀL

Allāh is The Beauty; He loves the beautiful.  
{Prophetic saying}

In all cases ṢAbū-l-Ḥasan was wont to advise equilibrium {ṣiṭadal} and advised his murīdūn, “Do not be immoderate in {your} renunciation of the world {la tasrif bi-taraka ad-dunya} else their darkness fall upon you and you embrace rebellion and thus return to their embrace, having lost everything you gained from leaving them: by exertion {himmah}, by thought {fikir}, by discipline {irādah} or by action {ḥarakah}.”<sup>39</sup>

Professor ‘Alī Sālīm ‘Amār writes, “aṣḥ-Shādhīdī used to dress magnificently {fākhir}, ride swift nimble-footed horses {al-fāriḥ min ad-duāb}, and acquired race horses {al-khaylu-l-jīād}.” During the days of the great religious festivals, ṢAbū-l-Ḥasan sought to capture the attention of the people with a view to making these festivals alive for the people. They would celebrate with worship, with dhikr, giving of alms and with great mounted parades. When he rode in the festival {al-muwāsīm} he would be surrounded by both the notables from among the fuqarā and from among the worldly; flags would be swirled above his head and the beating of great kettle drums would proceed him.

“aṣḥ-Shādhīdī was never attracted by false fame {aṣḥ-shiharatu-z-zāʿifah} or even true fame. Rather it was his understanding that the people occasionally needed a strong shock {hazzatun qawīyyah} or heightened vibration to return their vision to the true reason for the religious festivals {al-muwāsīmu-d-dīniyah} and remind them of their spiritual verities by those festivals.”

Thus we can see that on his human side, ṢAbū-l-Ḥasan was not narrow minded {mutazammit} and rigid. He said, “The Way {aṭ-ṭarīq} is not attained through monasticism {ar-rahbāniyyah}, neither by eating barley and bran {la bi-ʾakl shaʿīr wa-n-nakhālah}<sup>40</sup> nor by subsisting in a trade or profession {bi-baqīqatu-ṣ-ṣanāʿah}. It is attained by steadfastness under orders {bi-ṣabri ʿala -l-ʾawāmr}, and certainty in guidance {al-yaqīn fi-l-hidāyah}, as Allāh has said,

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا  
وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

WA JAʿALNA MINHUM ʾAʾIMMATAY YAHḌŪNA BI-ʾAMRINA LAMMA ṢABARŪ  
WA KĀNŪ BI-ʾAYĀTINA YUQINUŪN

And when they were patient, and they were certain of Our Signs,  
We appointed leaders from among them  
who guided by Our Command.

{32:24}

<sup>39</sup> Laṭāʿif al-Minan

<sup>40</sup> asceticism

We could describe ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan as a handsome man, an eloquent speaker, elegant in his dress, flexible in his manners, a horse lover and superb horseman both in flat racing as well as in public showmanship. This is how he appeared. If that is all he was we wouldn't be saying much, and surely if that were all there was to say about him he would not have been remembered nor would he have counted for much in world history.

Rather we must now speak of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan as a Sage and a Ṣūfī.

Sidī ʿAbdu-l-Wahhāb aṣḤ-Šhāʿrānī says of him,

“We are told that when the perfected Shaykh {aṣḤ-shaykḥu-l-kāmal}, ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-Šhādhḍhulī, had fully exhausted his own choices {ʾikḥtīyārahu} with Allāh, he remained six months without asking Allāh for anything. Later he heard a call within his secret self {sirr}, ‘Ask us for a slavery {ʿubūdiyyah}<sup>41</sup> that has in it no preference {rajih} either for giving {ʿaṭā} or receiving {maʿfa}. Say, ‘I have asked Allāh and I have hoped from him total obedience {ʾimtithālān} without restriction {taḥjīrān}. He creates what he wants as he chooses; with Him there is no choice.’”

In this way ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan extinguished {fanā} his choice in Allāh. This rank {al-muratabah} is not attained by one in the beginnings of the journey {as-sāʾirah} to Allāh. It is preceded {yasbiqaha} by fierce struggle {jihādu shāq}. How did ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan arrive to the state of such expiation or correspondence {yastarsil} with Allāh that his own personal will {ʾirādah} was extinguished in His Will and his own personal choice vanished in His Choice? To be by Allāh {yakūn bi-llāh} in both Will and Execution {ʾiṣḍārā}.

Education was the basic component {al-ʿunsur al-ʾawwal} that produced the character of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-Šhādhḍhulī. He started learning when he was quite young and gained a yield from it when he was still small. He was refined and set right in the cultivation of his mind {fatathāqaf} by first preparing his way through the memorization {ḥafadhā} of the Qurʾān, the study of the sunnah {customary practices of the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him} and the study of Religious Sciences {al-ʿulūmu-d-dīniyyah}: the means and the ends {wasāʾil wa ghāyāt}. “He did not enter into the Knowledge of the Folk {ʿulūmu-l-qawm}<sup>42</sup> until he was fully prepared in the studies of the Exoteric Sciences {ʿulūmu-dh-dhāhirah}<sup>43</sup>”; i.e., “the vast knowledge {ʿulum jamah}” and he was a master of “the knowledge or sciences of the widely learned or well read {ʿulūm-l-ghāzīrah}.”<sup>44</sup>

Thus he entered into the ‘sciences’ safely and soundly {silamman-fa-silamma}. He then began to choose among the books that he had studied and explained {sharḥ} and counselled {naṣaḥa} his companions among those he loved to read certain books. Among them were:

1] *Kitāb Khatm al-ʾawliyāʾ*, {Book of the Signet of the Friends} by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī. This was a book which created a great stir and was the cause of many troubles {ṣuʿubatan kathīrah} to its author due to the views he expressed within it. It attracted the attention of aṣḤ-Šhaykh al-ʾAkbar, Muḥīyu-d-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī and was a great influence {aṭḥar} on him to the point that he devoted a special book to it as well as some pages in *al-Futuhāt*<sup>45</sup> where he endeavoured to reply to some of the questions that it raised. In doing so he put himself to the test in spite of his high position in the spheres of philosophy {falsafah}, wisdom {ḥikmah}, science {ʿilm} and spiritual knowledge {taṣawwuf}. He also laid down a challenge {taḥaddīn} as if to say, “Here I am giving

<sup>41</sup> worship, humble veneration, bondage, servitude

<sup>42</sup> Taṣawwuf or Ṣūfī knowledge.

<sup>43</sup> Religious Sciences Laws {sharīʿa}, Roots {uṣūl}, Application {muʿāmalah} etc.

<sup>44</sup> *Latāʾif al-Minan* pp 44

<sup>45</sup> *Futuhāt al-Makkiyyah*

the answers to questions and I challenge anyone to refute the soundness {*ṣiḥah*} or correctness of the answers.” By way of explaining {*sharḥ*} this book, Abū-l-Ḥasan used to give lessons that were so awesome {*rauʿ*} in their profundity {*baligh*} that Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī feared missing a lesson due to their importance. So much so that even when he was travelling and involved in distant places making *daʿwah* he would seek any means to find the opportunity of attending these lessons. This book was lost for many years but a few years ago Professor ʿUṭmān Yaḥya came across a copy in Bayrūt and has published a certified critical copy <sup>46</sup> along with studies of *al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī*.

Ibn ʿAtāʾ Illāh as-Sakandarī, may Allāh be pleased with him, said about ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, “He and Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan highly respected al-Imām ar-Rabbānī Muḥammad bin ʿAlī at-Tirmidhī and they both held his words in the esteem of deep love. {*al-ḥudḥwatu-t-tāmah*}.”

Before going on to the next book we would like to mention here something that Ibn ʿAtāʾ said. “One of my friends told me, ‘The Shaykh said, “I was told that there is no majlis of Fiqh in all the world more brilliant than that of Shaykh ʿIzzu-d-Dīn ʿAbdu-s-Salām and there is no majlis of Ḥadīth in all the world more brilliant than Shaykh Zakīu-d-Dīn ʿAbdu-l-ʿAdhīm and there is no majlis in reality {*ḥaqīqah*} other than yours.”

2] *al-Mawāqif wa al-Mukḥtabāt* {The Stations and the Communications} by ash-Shaykh Muḥammad bin ʿAbdu-l-Jabbār an-Niffarī. This is by no means an easy book. It explains the high spiritual stations {*ḥalātu-r-rūḥiyyatu ʿāliyah*} that can be understood only by those with exalted perceptions {*al-ʿadḥwāqu-l-ʿāliyah*}. It is a book for the elite {*al-khāṣṣah*} that ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan sought to simplify {*yuyasirruhu*} for those who were prepared to open that which was closed to them from the sublime universe of wisdom {*ʿālamu-l-ḥikmah*}.

Ibn ʿAtāʾ relates the following story about ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan,

“One day he was in the house of az-Zakī as-Sarāj and the book *al-Mawāqif* {The Stations} was read to him. He said, ‘Where is Abū-l-ʿAbbās?’ When ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās came the Shaykh said to him, ‘Speak my son. Speak by the blessings of Allāh within you {*takalam bāraku-llāhu fik*}. Speak and you will never be silent again.’

“ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās said, ‘Since that time I have spoken by the tongue of the Shaykh.’

3] *Qūttu-l-Qulūb* {Nourishment for the Hearts} by ʿAbī Tālib al-Makkī.

4] *al-ʾIḥyāʾ al-ʿUlūmu-d-Dīn* {Revivification of Religious Sciences} by ʿAbū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī.

These last two books are of a single nature. ʿImām al-Ghazālī was influenced in his book, the *ʾIḥyāʾ*, by ʿAbū Tālib al-Makkī. He himself stated that he read *Qūttu-l-Qulūb* from beginning to end in order to learn about Taṣawwuf. ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan said, “Get the *qūt* from *al-Qūt*. Get nourishment from *The Nourishment of Hearts*. *al-ʾIḥyāʾ* enlightens you with knowledge and *Qūttu-l-Qulūb* enlightens you with light.” He also said, “If you want something from Allāh ask through the agency {*wasilā*} of ʿAbī Ḥamid {al-Ghazālī}.”

5] Parallel with these two books, Imām ash-Shādhidhulī used to read and explain *ar-Risālatu-l-Qushayriyyah* {The Message of al-Qushayrī}, which we mentioned earlier and shall mention again.

6] *Kitāb ash-Shifāʾ* {The Healing Book} by al-Qāḍī ʿAyyād is a blessed book highly rated in many circles. ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan used to read it and recommended that others among his students read it.

7] The most highly favoured book by ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan in the sphere of Tafsīr {explanation} al-Qurʾān was *al-Muḥararu-l-Wajīz* {Concise Entries} by Ibn ʿAṭīyyah, the subject of which is explained by its title. The author

<sup>46</sup> *Kitāb Khatm al-ʿawliyyāʾ*, Bayrūt, 1965

chose his words very carefully and the statements are quite precise though, perhaps, not quite as concise as al-Jalālayn or al-Bayḍāwī. It is presently being published in the Magḥrib, where the first and second volumes have been printed to date {1387 H, 1966 M}.

These are the books that have been mentioned in respect to ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan in the old references {*al-maṣādiru-l-qadimah*}. They are of extraordinary value {*ghayatu-n-nafāsah*} and are proof of high mastery in the fields of Tafsīr, as-Sīratu-n-Nabawīyyah {the life of Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him} and at-Taṣawwuf {The Spiritual Essence of al-ʿIslām}.

ʿImām asḥ-Shaʿarānī, may Allāh be content with him, wrote in his life of his Shaykh, ʿAlī al-Kḥawāṣ, “The basic axiom {*al-qāidah*} with Shaykh ʿAbī Ḥasan and Shaykh ʿAbī-l-ʿAbbās and Shaykh Tajū-d-Dīn bin ʿAtāʾillāh and Shaykh Yāqūt al-ʿArṣh in accepting students was that not one student could enter into the Way {*aṭ-Ṭarīq*} until he had thoroughly and deeply penetrated {*tabaḥḥurat*} the subject of the Sciences of Religion {*ʿulūmu-sha-sharīʿah*} and their related subjects in order that they might be able to ‘cut through’ {*yaqfʿa*} to the religious scholars {*al-ʿulamāʾ*} at the gatherings of debate {*majālisu-l-munadḥarah*} by means of clear arguments {*bi-al-hujaju-l-wāḍiḥah*}.

If they had not delved deeply they were not permitted to enter into the covenant {*lā yaḥḥudḥuna ʿalayhi-l-ʿahd*} of initiation.” Truly knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} was one of the catalysts {*ʿunṣur min ʿanāʾir*} of the personality of the ʿImām asḥ-Shāḥḍḥulī as it is also of his Ṭarīqah {Way}, as it was also of the Prophet, benedictions of Allāh and Peace be upon him, who was ordered to say,

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

WA QUR-RABBI ZIDNĪ ʿILMĀ

and say, My Lord, increase me {in} knowledge  
{20:114p}

He, to Whom all praises are due, said,

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

ʿINNAMĀ YAKḥShĀ ALLAHA MIN ʿIBBĀDIHI-L-ʿULAMĀĀʿU

Truly only those of His Slaves who fear Allāh have knowledge  
{35:28p}

ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan reveals his high rank among the Shuyūkh when he considers ignorance and contentment with ignorance as a cardinal sin {*al-kabāʾir*}, and even more, he considers it to be among the greatest of the cardinal sins. He says,

“There is no greater sin than these two:

1} To love the world {*ad-dunyā*} by choice and

2} to settle your ‘self’ in contentment with ignorance.”



يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

YARFA‘I-LLAHU-L-LADHĪNA ‘ĀMANŪ MINKUM  
WA-L-LADHĪNA ‘ŪTŪ-L-‘ILMA DARAJĀT

*Allāh raises to high ranks those among you who securely believe  
and those who have knowledge.*

{58:11p}

Love of the world is at the base of every sin and contentment with ignorance is the root of every folly.

We should not pass over this area of ‘ilm without remembering an example which shows the profound depths {‘umuqa‘‘amīq} and the subtle {daqīq} understanding in matters {masā’il} of learnedness {‘ilīmīyyah} to which ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan arrived.

Every time we see one of the intimations {ishārāt} of the ‘ilm of ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan in which he suffused {‘ilbis} ‘official knowledge’ or ‘conventional knowledge’ {al-‘ilmu rasmī} with the fragrance of the spirit {nasīmu-l-‘arwāḥ} and overlaid {‘ulbisat} the ascension of the spirit {ma‘ārijū-l-‘arwāḥ} with that same conventional knowledge we feel so very sorry for the negligence that occurred in recording the lessons of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh sanctify his secret..

However he “wrote” men instead of books.

Once he was asked, “Why don’t you write books to guide men on the way to Allāh?”

He replied, “My companions are my books.”<sup>47</sup>

Whils. we firmly believe that he raised men who propagated {nasharu} his ‘knowledge’ and called others to his Way, still we wish that some one from among his murīdūn had been concerned with recording his treasures {nafā‘isah} and pearls.

We quote here one long example from his letters {risālah}; this one to a friend, Sīdī ‘Alī bin Makhḷūf, in Tūnis. The extract concerns ar-Rūḥ {The Spirit}, about which Allāh says,

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۚ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي

WA YAS‘ALŪNAKA ‘ANI-R-RŪḤ: QUL AR-RŪḤU MIN ‘AMRI RABBĪ:

*and they ask you about The Spirit : Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord:*  
{17:85p}

This precious sign {al-āyatu-l-karīmah} was the subject of great differences between the exegetes {al-mufasarīn}, many of whom saw the āyah as an order to cease asking questions about the Spirit. They, in this case, meant the human spirit {an-nafsu-l-‘insānīyah} for it is under, by, with, and from the command of Allāh {min ‘amru-Llāh} and only He, praise be to Him, commands it.

<sup>47</sup> Laṭā‘if al-Minan

Others said that, on the contrary, this āyah referred to the Precious Qurʾān and gave for proof {*dalīl*} the development {*siyāq*} of preceding āyāt and their true meanings, in which the Precious Qurʾān is referred to as *ruh* as well as is the angel *Jibrīl* {Gabriel} may peace be upon him.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا  
مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ  
وَلَكِن جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا  
وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

WA KADḤĀLIKA ʾAWḤAYNĀĀ ʾILAYKA RŪHAM-MIN ʾAMRINA:  
MĀ KUNTA TADRĪ MĀ-L-KITĀBU WA LĀ-L-ʾĪMAN  
WA LAKIN JAʿALNĀHU NŪRAN NAHDĪ BIHI MAN NASHĀĀ MIN ʾIBĀDINA  
WA ʾINNAKA LATAHDĪ ILĀ ŠIRĀTIM MUSTAQĪM ﴿٥٢﴾

*even so We have revealed to you Divine Inspiration by Our Command  
You did not know what the Book was nor Secure Belief  
and We made it a Light by which We guide whom We choose of Our slaves  
and you — surely you shall guide to a straight path ﴿٥٢﴾*  
{42:52}

But does the āyah really order us to stop asking about ar-Rūḥ, or does ‘ar-Rūḥ’ in this āyah mean something other than the human spirit?

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan did not take either of these two lines of thought. He had another view which reveals his depth, singularity and subtlety of thought. He says,

“Those who hold the opinion that this knowledge or science {*ilm*}, and by this I mean the knowledge or science of ar-Rūḥ and others, mentioned and not mentioned, is not known by the illustrious élite {*al-khāṣṣatu-l-ʿāliyah*} from the Family of Badʿa {*al-baḍʿa-l-ʿalā*}<sup>48</sup>, have surely fallen into two great errors: {1} in imputing ignorance to Friends of Allāh {*awliyāʾu-llāh*} in that they imagine them to have fallen short [of comprehension] and {2} in holding that their Lord has deprived them [of that knowledge].

“How is it possible to impute such to the élite?

“To do so is a denial of the Divine Power {*al-qudrah*} and the Divine Law {*ash-sharʿ*} as {attested} by His Saying to the Jews and the Arabs in the Time of Ignorance, whatever else may be implied,

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي

WA YASʾALŪNAKA ʿANI-R-RŪḤ: QUL AR-RŪḤU MIN ʾAMRI RABBĪ  
*and they ask you about The Spirit — Say: The Spirit is by Command of my Lord*  
{17:85p}

<sup>48</sup> Those who have precedence or those who go first or those who are the originators. Members of the spiritual hierarchy.

The proof {*dalīl*} is that a question {in Arabic} occurs by means of four particles:

هَلْ	♦	كَيْفَ	♦	لِمَ	♦	مِنْ
HAL	♦	KAYFA	♦	LIMA	♦	MAN
IS IT?	♦	HOW?	♦	WHY?	♦	FROM?

The '*hal*' occurs in a question as to whether a thing exists or not.

The '*kayfa*' occurs in a question regarding the state of a thing.

The '*lima*' occurs in a question regarding the cause of a thing.

The '*man*' occurs in a question regarding the location of a thing.

"There is nothing about these in the preceding āyah. If you say '*hal*' the meaning requires an answer to; 'Is The Spirit existent or not?', and surely the Jews already acknowledged beforehand its existence else He would not have said, {meaning} 'And they question you *about* The Spirit', for from this we know that they already acknowledged its prior existence and so the argument of '*hal*' is of no account.

"And it contains no question as to the state '*kayfa*' which is 'How is it?' nor is there any question regarding its cause '*lima*' of 'why this?' or 'why that?', for if there had been they {those who asked the question} would not have been content with His Answer: {meaning} "Say: *The Spirit is by command of my Lord*"; for they would have made a commotion {*shaghhyū*} and withdrawn {*radū*} since that was their way {*shaghal*}, their want {*āda*} and their desire {*irāda*}.

"Thus it is that the question refers only to the object itself. 'From where {*min*} is it?', the *dalīl* of which is in the very answer itself: "*The Spirit is by [or from] the command of my Lord*". Since the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, knew what they were asking and replied with the words of Allāh. It is like asking, 'Where is Adam, peace be upon him, from?' The questioned one understanding the request says, 'Adam, peace be upon him, is from clay.' When the questioner is satisfied he does not go on asking questions. He who asks questions will not be satisfied until he reaches a great understanding from the Exalted and Awesome Truth {*ilā bi-fahimin 'adhīmin min al-haqqi-l-'adhīm*} which cannot be refuted {*la maraddu lahu*}.

"How can one assert that He is not known and it is not fitting that He be known? Allāh has made knowledge of Him incumbent {*awjab*} on us even though there is nothing like Him {*la mithlahu*}. To forfeit this {*dayyanāhu*} knowledge is to hide {*kafārā*} the truth or rebel {*uṣāh*}. Creation has a myriad of likenesses {*amthālahu kathīrah*}. Is it not the essence of ignorance {*aynu-l-jahl*} to say, 'It is not permissible {*lā yajūz*} that we know that which has a likeness {*al-mithal*} and a correspondence {*an-nadhīr*}, which is the Spirit {*ar-rūh*}, whilst He makes binding {*yujib*} upon us spiritual knowledge {*ma'arifah*} of He Who has no likeness {*lā shabihu*} and no correspondent? We take refuge in Allāh from the ignorance of the ignorant and the oppression of oppressors.

"What I say is that with Allāh there are secrets {*asrār*} that cannot be traced out {*raṣam*} but yet should not be hermetically sealed {*khātam*}. They cannot be written as remedies {*ad-dawāwayn*} for the spiritually blind or those incapable of realization {*du'afā' an-najā'iz*}, but to hide them away is not appropriate for they are so blinding and apparent.

“Do not incline to them no matter the multiplicity of their arguments. {*hujajah*}, but submit to the Truth {*dhalla al-haqq*} and yield {*akhḍā*} to that which is in it {*fīmā hum fihi*} and resist {*ʿaraḍ*} them in those things of which they have no knowledge. Allāh, praised be He, ordered Muḥammad to follow ʾIbrāhīm and the other Prophets, benedictions of Allāh and peace be upon them all, even though he was the most eminent {*al-fāḍil*} of all of them and he to whom no one can compare.

“He says, ‘I am their partner in prophecy {*qad sharaktahum fī-n-nubūwwah*}, in deliverance of the message {*ar-risālah*}, in guidance {*al-hidāyah*}, in that which befalls their selves {*an-nufūs*} in regards to their bodies, hearts and spirits.’ So imitate them in those things in which sharing is possible and what we have given especially for us it is by us, in us and for us. Who understands this secret professes <sup>49</sup> {*dāna*} to Allāh along with the commonality {*ʿammah*}, with those of the middle {*ʿawsāṭ*} and with the highest {*al-ʿālīn*} and is especially singled out among the élite {*kḥāṣṣ li-l-makḥṣūṣīn*}.

“So if you are one of them increase your knowledge and make your actions those of a faqīr before Allāh and be humble {*tawāḍʿā*} before His slaves and incline in compassion {*ʿaṭafa bi-r-raḥmah*} to the commonality {*ʿammah*} of believers even if they are oppressors {*dhālimīn*}, except where you are ordered by Allāh to deal with them harshly. Even then supplicate {*al-daʿā*} for them devoutly and provide {*daʿa*} for them.” <sup>50</sup>

ʾImām al-Būṣīrī, author of the *Litany of the Mantle* {*al-Burdah*}, likened ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan to a ‘Sea of Knowledge’ {*baḥru-l-ʿilm*} and the poet Ibn Mubliq said of ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan,

“He was deeply rooted in the ocean of the sharīʿah;  
especially in the farāʾid and the sunnah.  
From the spring {*manhal*} of tawḥīd he drank deeply.  
May Allāh bless him for relieving the sick at heart.  
He attained knowledge not attained by any writer  
for how could any writer attain that mastery?”

Biographers of ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan as well as poets have attested to his knowledge, its depth and its authenticity. We have already mentioned what Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh said about him in the sphere of ʿilm,

“{He had} the knowledge of the outer sciences {*ʿulumu-dh-dhāhirah*} in all their subtle details and art. He opened out the virgin {*muftaḍan li-ʾabkār*} meanings and their sources in the spheres of prophetic sayings {*ḥadīth*}, explanation of Qurʾān {*tafsīr*}, Islamic jurisprudence {*fiqh*}; roots {*ʿuṣūl*} of the Law, analogical grammar {*naḥwah*}, economics {*taṣrīf*}, language {*luḡah*}, rational logic {*maʿqūl*}, wisdom {*ḥikmah*} and refinement {*ʿāḍāb*}. In regard to the Science of Spiritual Knowledge {*ʿulūmu-l-maʿārifu-l-ʾilāhiyyah*}, he was its spiritual axis {*quṭubi raḥāha*} and bright shining sun {*shamsi ḍuḥāha*}.” <sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> follows in the way of the religion, the creed or belief. From this root {*dāna*} are derived all those words like *dīn* = religion, *dīnī* = religious, *diyāna* = confession, communion, *mutadayyin* = pious etc. Also, and very importantly, is the meaning of ‘debt’ and ‘indebtedness’ deriving from this same root. From this it can be understood that what we call the ‘dīn’ or prosaically, ‘the religion’ is in fact the debt which we owe Allāh and which must be paid off. The ‘dīn’, and everything associated and connected to it, including all of the actions incumbent upon us is, in this sense, nothing more or less than the cost of living, the price of life which is to be rendered either voluntarily here in this world or forcibly extracted in the last.

<sup>50</sup> *Durrat al-ʾAsrār*

<sup>51</sup> *al-Mafākhir al-ʿAliyyah*



Concerning ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan's secret or private knowledge, Ibn ʿAtāʾillāh said that "He was the master of the exalted subtle signals {*al-ʾishārātu-l-ʿaliyah*} and radiant modes of explanation {*al-ʿibarātu-l-sanīyah*} who brought the Folk {*al-qawm*} to the Path {*aṭ-ṭariq*} by a wondrous way {*bi-l-ʾuslūbu-l-ʿajīb*} and an extraordinary program {*al-manhajū-l-gharīb*} that brought together knowledge {*ʿilm*}, spiritual state {*ḥāl*}, intense striving {*al-himmah*} and rational logic {*maʿqāl*}.

- An indication of this can be intimated from the following story contained in the *Durrat al-ʾĀsrar* related by the emminent shaykh, faqīh and muftī, Jamālu-dīn Yūsuf al-ʿIrāqī in the city of al-Qāhirah in 715 Hijri. He said, "I heard Sīdī Shaykh, the Walī and ʿArif bi-llāh, ʿAbī-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, Allāh benefit us by his barakah, say, 'I prayed behind Sīdī Shaykh, the Master ʿAbī-l-Ḥasan in the Night Prayer {*al-ʿishāʾ*} and he read Sūratu-sh-Shūrā {42:49-50} and when he came to the saying of Allāh,

يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنِثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ  
أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنِثَاءً وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا

YAHABU LIMAN-YASHĀʾU INTĤAÑ WA YAHABU LIMAN-YASHĀʾU-DĤ-DĤUKŪR  
ʾAW YUZAWWIJUHUM DĤUKRĀNAN WA ʾINĀTHĤA  
WA YAJʿALU MAN-YASHĀʾU ʿAQĪMĀ

*He bestows females upon whom He Wills and He bestows males upon whom He Wills  
Or He couples them, males and females and He makes barren whom He Wills*  
{42:49-50p}

there came into my self {*nafsi*} something of its meaning. When the Shaykh finished the ṣalāh he said to me, 'Yā ʿAbā-l-ʿAbbās, *He bestows females upon whom He Wills*, that is acts of worship {*al-ʿibādāt*} and transactions {*al-muʿamalāt*}, and *He bestows males upon whom He Wills*, that is states {*al-ʾaḥwāl*} and knowledge {*al-ʿulūm*} and stations {*al-maqāmāt*}, or *He couples them, males and females*, bringing them together in whoever He wills of His worshippers, or *He makes barren whom He Wills*, that is He leaves them with neither knowledge {*ʿilm*} or action {*ʿamal*}. I was amazed at this {*fataʿajbtu min dḥalika*} whereupon he said to me, 'By Allāh! There is nothing that has occurred in the mind of anyone in that ṣalāh but that Allāh made it known to me.'"

These sciences are shields {*atrās*} and an explanation of the experiences of souls {*nufūs*} and their thoughts, their deceptions and desires. They ease the hearts from the consideration of, resting in and relying solely upon the theology of the mutakallimūn<sup>52</sup> and law, through a reliance upon love of Allāh and sincerity to the sunnah of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

He graduated many great ones from his academy such as ʿAbī-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, ʿAbī al-ʿAzāʾim Māḍī and their like, and among his students were many of those who aid and assist {*al-ʿawān*} from among the People of Allāh Most High. As was set forth in the lexicon of the depths of the sea {*shārh al-qāmūsu-l-muḥīṭ*}, *The Crown of the Bride* {*Taj al-ʿArūs*} by Sīdī Murtaḍa az-Zubaydī, "Among those who attended his gatherings {*majālis*} were, al-ʿIzz Ibn ʿAbdu-s-Salām, Ibn Daqqīq al-ʿĪd, Nāhik Bihamā, al-Hāfiḍh al-Mandḥirī, Ibn al-Hājib, Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāh, Ibn ʿAṣfūr, and others who met in the Madrasah al-Kāmlīyah in al-Qahirah."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See footnotes 1 and 2 on page 242 and 243 of *Orisons*, Volume One of *al-Madrasatu-sh-Shādhīdīyah*

<sup>53</sup> *Shārh al-Zubaydī on Hizb al-Barr* p 4

## ʿABŪ-L-ḤASAN in the BATTLE of MANṢŪRAH



ince some people have thought, and still think, that Ṣūfīs are idle people and that taṣawwuf is a sign of weakness, we shall now write about an aspect of the personality of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan which, like a bomb, will destroy all such spurious suspicions concerning taṣawwuf. This component of the personality of our Shāykh is his commitment, both outer and inner, to engage in face-to-face encounters in battle.

It is by clear intention that we approach this subject immediately after our discussion on knowledge {ilm} for, if taṣawwuf is an enemy of ignorance {lā yaʿllifu-l-jahāl}, it is definitely an ally {ḥalīf} of face-to-face encounters in battle {kifāh} and unremitting struggle {jihād}.

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ  
هُوَ أَجْتَبَكُمْ  
وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ

WA JĀHIDŪ FI-LLAHI ḤAQQA JIHĀDIH:  
HUWA-JĀ-TABĀKUM  
WA MĀ JAʿALA ʿALAYKUM FI-D-DĪNI MIN HARAJ ʾ

*Struggle mightily for the sake of Allāh as is His due  
— He has chosen you —  
and He has not laid upon you any hardship in the Dīn.  
{22:78p}*

If we turn back to the last part of the first half of the seventh century of the hijrah {1258 CE} and allow our imaginations to roam in the streets of the northern delta city of Manṣūrah<sup>54</sup>, we will be witness to a very rare phenomenon {ḍḥāhirah} to those who have lived through modern wars.<sup>55</sup> It was the phenomenon of a widely shared and pervasive secure and certain belief {al-ʿimān} and free and open confidence in Allāh {aṭṭhiqatu-l-mutlaqtu-bi-llāh} on behalf of the Muslimṣ of that time.

It was only natural that we should also behold a city that was the scene of endless activity, for the people of Miṣr were preparing themselves to face an invading army who had already occupied the city of Dumiyāt and were preparing to advance inland in order to occupy the country. Reinforcements were being built up; supplies were arriving, orders were being firmly given and heavily armed men were fast pouring into the city. The Mamlūk commanding general and the future Sulṭān, aḍḍ-Ḍḥāhir Baybars al-Bunduqdāri, had no time for rest and was limited to but a few moments of sleep.

On the other side was Louis IX, King of France, leading the vast combined armies of the Crusaders {al-ṣalībīyīn}. The desire of the king was to bring down and subdue {yanāzul} ʿIslām in a final decisive battle {maʿrakatu fāṣilatu ḥāsimah} which would take place in Manṣūrah.

<sup>54</sup> see end maps

<sup>55</sup> the reader should remember Dr. AHM lived and took part in the wars that swept the Middle East in the mid-20th C.E. as the Muslims sought to dislodge first the Europeans occupiers and, later, the Zionist occupiers of the Muslim lands; a struggle, in the latter instance, that is still going on at the time this book was written and is being translated and edited.

The combined forces of the West were fully prepared to attack Miṣr in a battle that would destroy ʿIslām and the Arabs by destroying the Maṣryyīn {Egyptians}. The situation was similar to the time when the polytheists {*mushrikūn*} at the Battle of the Trench {*ghazwatu-l-khandaq*} sought to annihilate {*yudamir*} ʿIslām by putting an end to {*bi-qadāʾ*} Madīnah al-Munawwarrah and killing the first Muslims living within the city who were under the leadership of the Prophet of Allāh, benedictions and peace be upon him.

There is another similarity between the Battle of Manṣūrah and the Battle of the Trench in that at both times the forces of polytheism {*shirk*} gathered together all their combined forces and resources in an attempt to destroy belief in Oneness {*at-tawhīd*} on its home ground {*fi ʿuqra dārahu*}.

The polytheists of former times attacked Madīnah al-Munawwarrah and then besieged it. The polytheists of that time had already broken through the borders {*ʾikhtirāqu-l-hudūd*} and were marching through the land taking towns on the way down to Manṣūrah until they had reached the very outskirts {*ʾaṭrāf*} of the city. In both instances, though the danger was apparent, the Muslims were confident in their hearts and souls {*ṭhabati-l-janān*}, fully believing in the Victory of Allāh and tranquil as to the final destiny {*qadāʾih*}.

If we want an explanation of that complete confidence in Allāh {*ath-ṭhaqata fi-llāh*} that the Muslims experienced at the Battle of the Trench it is surely easy and clear: the Muslims were led by the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, and amongst them were ʿAbū Bakr and ʿUmar and ʿUṭhmān and ʿAlī and the great companions, may Allāh be content with all of them. These, by their absolute confidence and trust in Allāh, inspired in the others the same trust and confidence in Allāh.

In Manṣūrah the explanation is not so easily come by, for that faith and trust and confidence and absolute security which prevailed and filled the hearts of the heroic Mujāhidīn with eagerness {*al-jidd*} and energy {*an-nashāt*} so that they were able to endure {*tahmul*} their fatigue and sleepless nights as well as their days of work cannot be understood simply by reviewing statesmanship or military leaders or numbers of troops that the leaders were able to assemble for the defense of ʿIslām.

The real truth {*ḥaqīqah*} was that in Miṣr at that time there was an outstanding group of absolutely committed and thoroughly dedicated scholars {*al-ʿulamāʾ*} whose jihad was for Allāh, and by Allāh, and to Allāh alone. These ʿulamāʾ were not deceived or seduced in any way or at any time by the shiny ornaments {*zakhrāfah*} and glittering embellishments {*zīnah*} of the world {*ad-dunyāh*} of dust.

These were such men as al-ʿIzz bin ʿAbdu-s-Salām, Majīdu-d-Dīn al-Qushayrī, Muḥyīu-d-Dīn bin Sarāqah, and Majīdu-i-Dīn al-Akḥmīmī as well as our Shaykh, ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhḍhulī, among others who were from the very best of the ʿulamāʾ.

These ʿulamāʾ did not stay at home far from danger; on the contrary they all embarked {*habbu*} on the struggle in the way of Allāh {*jihad fi sabīli-llāh*} and took themselves to Manṣūrah to be among the Mujāhidīn, and, in spite of the fact that ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣh-Shādhḍhulī was at that time almost at the end of his life and was nearly blind, he was among the first to reach Manṣūrah.

These are they; the scholarly Ṣūfis or the Ṣūfī scholars {*al-ʿulamāʾu-ṣ-ṣūfiyyah aw aṣ-ṣūfiyahtu-l-ʿulamāʾ*} stamped and sealed by an angelic {*bi-simatihimu-l-malāʾakī*} and unshakeable faith making their way among the soldiers {*al-jund*}, urging, exhorting, guiding by the Light of Allāh and reminding all of the “Two Best Things” {*al-ḥasanayn*}: Victory or the Garden {*an-naṣr aw al-jannah*}.

They were those who surely knew and knew surely and knew in accord with the saying of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, that surely paradise rests under the shadow of the sword.

And when the orders came they worked with their own hands to aid in securing that victory.

Their very presence in the streets and amongst the soldiers was a constant reminder of al-ḥasanayn; of the Victory and of the Garden. Thus they motivated the people, reassured them in their faith and confirmed the early examples of jihād as practiced at the beginning by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and his companions, may Allāh be content with them.

When they had assured themselves of the ends and means; the outer material {*al-mādiyatu-dh-dhāhirah*} and the inner morale {*al-maʿanawīyatu-l-bāʿinah*} and night had fallen, all the scholars would gather together in a tent {*kḥayamah*} in the camp and petition Allāh by prayers and supplications for victory. When they had completed their devotions and supplications they used to read from one book or another.

One night they were reading from *ar-Risālatu-l-Qushayriyyah*, and as it was read to them they would interpret {*yasmaʿūn*} and comment {*yashraḥūn*} upon it. From what chapter of the *Risālāh* were they reading that night? Were they reading the chapter on chivalry {*al-futūwah*}? Were they reading the chapter on freedom {*al-ḥurriyyah*}? Or were they reading it from beginning to end sequentially?

Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-ṢḤĀDHDHULĪ was listening silently. When they had all finished they asked him, although they were all masters in their fields, to give his views. In fact, they insisted on hearing from him, and even so the Shaykh kept his silence for some time. Finally he began to speak in a deeply spiritual {*rūḥāniyyah*} vein. The essence of what he said could not be more perfectly expressed than in the words of Shaykh ʿIzzu-d-Dīn bin ʿAbdu-s-Salām,

“Hear these amazing words newly sprung from Allāh.”

أَسْمَعُوا هَذَا الْكَلَامَ الْغَرِيبَ، الْقَرِيبَ الْعَهْدَ مِنْ اللَّهِ

ʿISMʿU HADḤĀ-L-KALĀMA-L-GḤARĪBā • AL-QARĪBA-L-ʿAHDA MIN-LLĀH

It was ḡharīb {الغريب} <sup>56</sup> because it was not taken from books or to be found in scripture {*al-asfār*}.

It was qarīb {القريب} <sup>57</sup> because it was the inspiration of the moment {*ilḥāmu-s-sāʿah*}.

At Manṣūrah ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan, voluntarily placing himself under the orders of the men-at-arms, worked day and night on behalf of the Muslims {*bi-ʿamri-l-muslimīn*} without any thought of recompense {*li-llāh*}, taking only brief naps from night to night.

One night in the midst of his hastily snatched sleep he had a *ruʾyā* {veridical dream} concerning the state of the Muslims which was later recorded in *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*.

<sup>56</sup> ḡharīb = strange, foreign, alien, queer, quaint, unusual, extraordinary, curious, remarkable, peculiar, amazing, astonishing, baffling, startling, wondrous, marvelous; difficult to understand, abstruse, obscure {language}; remote, outlandish, rare, uncommon {word}; also stranger, foreigner, alien, one who lives abroad.

<sup>57</sup> qarīb = near, close; easily understood; since recently, lately, not long ago as in {القريب العهد} *al-qarīb al-ʿahd*.



“He said, ‘I was al-Manṣūrah and it was the 8th night of Dhū-l-Ḥijjah. I had passed the night in concern for the Muslims and was especially concerned about the frontiers {*ath-thagh̃r*}; especially al-’Iskandarīyyah. I was making supplications {*ʿaḍuw*} to Allāh and entreaties {*ḍurūʿ*} on behalf of the Sulṭān and the Muslims.

“Toward the end of the night I saw a huge tent {*fusṭāt*}<sup>58</sup>, an expansive pavilion mounting into the sky; light shone upon it and it was teeming {*yazdahim*} with the creatures of the heavenly people {*ahlu-s-samāʾ*} whilst the peoples of the earth were distracted and gave it no heed.

“I asked, ‘To whom does this tent belong?’ and they replied, ‘To the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him.’

“So I ran to it with joy and met at its gate a group of scholars and learned men numbering about seventy. Among them I recognized ʿIzzu-d-Dīn bin ʿAbdu-s-Salām, the Faqīh Majīd ad-Dīn the teacher from Qūs, the Faqīh al-Kamāl son of the Qadī Ṣadr ad-Dīn, the Faqīh and Muḥadith Muḥī ad-Dīn ibn Surāqah, the Faqīh ʿAbdu-l-Ḥakīm ibn Abī-l-Ḥawāfīz. Together with them were two men whom I have not known any who were more handsome {*ʿajmal*} and would not have known had there not entered my mind a thought whilst in the ruʾyā, they were the Faqīh Zakī ad-Dīn ʿAbdu-l-ʿAdhīm the Muḥadith and aṣḥ-Ṣhaykh Majīd ad-Dīn al-ʿAkḥmīmī.

“I wanted to meet the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, but instead I held my self back out of politeness {*al-ʿadab*} to the Faqīh ʿAbdu-s-Salām, saying to myself, ‘It is not correct for you to precede the most learned man of the time {*ʿālimu-l-ʿamat hadḥa-z-zamān*}.’ So the Faqīh proceeded and we all went forward as the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, bade us sit to his right and left. I advanced weeping with both sorrow and joy (*bi-l-hamm wa bi-l-farah*). Joy due to my proximity and my nearness {*qurbī*} to the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, and by lineage {*bi-nasab*} and sorrowful concern {*hamm*} on behalf of the Muslims and the frontier. He, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, extended his hand until it encompassed {*qabid*} mine and said, ‘Do not be grieved with all this anxiety about the frontier. You must give sincere advice to the one in charge’, meaning the Sulṭān, ‘for if an unjust man {*dhālim*} rules over them then — perhaps —’ and here he clenched the five fingers of his left hand and narrowed the space between them as if to shorten his time — ‘and if a God-fearing man {*taqī*} governs — ..

and here he opened out both his right and left hands:

وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

WA-LLĀHU WALIYUL-L-MUTTAQĪN

and Allāh is the Friend of the Muttaqīn<sup>59</sup>

{45:19}

‘As for the Muslims,

<sup>58</sup> Fusṭāt is also the first Islamic settlement in Miṣr which was the tent city of the Muslim armies under the Commander who opened Miṣr: Khalid ibn Walid, may Allāh be merciful to him. This is an important dimension of the ruʾyā.

<sup>59</sup> from the root waqā- to guard, preserve, safeguard, shield, shelter, protect; beware, be wary, be on ones guard to make sure. This meaning is often {inadequately} translated as ‘God’fearing or ‘god’ly or as simple piety or devotion. We prefer to leave it in Arabic with this footnote to augment understanding of the term.

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ

WĀ MAN YATAWALLA-LLAHA WA RASŪLAHU WA-L-Dh-DhĪNA  
ʿĀĀMANŪ

FA-ʿINNA HIZBA-LLAHI HUMU-L-GhĀLIBŪN

*And whoever makes Allāh his friend, and His Messenger, and the believers  
the partisans of Allāh — they are the victors*

{5:56}

‘As for the Sultān, the Hand of Allāh is stretched {*mabsūṭah*} out over him with Mercy so long as he is the supporter of the Family of the Friends {*ʿahli-l-ʿwāliyah*} and follows the advice of the believers from among the worshippers. So, give him sincere counsel and write him thusly.

‘Be patient — the Promise of Allāh is True

Do not let those lacking in certainty disquiet you.

‘As for the people of ḍhulm {the oppressors}, do your absolute utmost against them.’

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ  
وَلَا يَسْتَخِفُّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ

FĀ-Ṣ-BĪR ʿINNA WAʿDA-LLAHI HAQQĀ  
WA LĀ YASTAKhIFFANNAKA-L-LADhĪNA LA YŪQINŪN

*So be patient. Surely the promise of Allāh is true;  
do not let those lacking certainty disquiet you.*

{30:60}

I said, ‘We shall gain the victory by the Lord of the Kaʿa bah,’ and I awoke.”<sup>60</sup>

And the victory was from Allāh and it was a glorious victory. King Louis was captured along with many of his generals. The poet Ibn Maṭrūḥ wrote this *qaṣīdah* {poem} for King Louis

“By your deeds your comrades you have placed  
in the depths of their graves  
seventy thousand you no longer see  
other than dead, captured or wounded.  
Ask them if they are thinking to come back  
for revenge or ugly deeds.  
Tell them the House of Ibn Luqmān<sup>61</sup> is still here.  
As well as the chains and Ṣabīḥ the guard.”

<sup>60</sup> *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*

<sup>61</sup> The house converted into a prison where Louis was held captive till he was ransomed against his promise not to undertake any military campaigns against the Muslims for twenty years. A promise he kept to the year, whereupon he attacked the Muslims in Tūnis, which is where he finally lost his life in battle.



would increase self-sufficiency by also raising livestock. Thus he raised oxen for both ploughing and harvesting as well as horses for draft, transportation and racing. He also made use of his experiences in farming when calling people to Allāh. In *Durrat al-ʾAsrār* the following story is related,

“One night I was calling out to Allāh, ‘I beg You, oh Allāh, to make Your Judgment, Your Love, Your Meeting, Your Essence {*dḥātik*} and the Essence of Your Prophet and the Secret of the Essence of Your Prophet, Your Blessings and Peace be upon him, more dear to me than the love of my own self and my family and wife and my wealth and all of humanity.’ I went on repeating this ecstatically and found it very sweet {*ḥalāwah*}. After I had been going on for sometime I felt ‘something would happen’. Whilst I remained sitting I was informed, ‘One of your oxen has fallen in the well.’ I said, ‘Truly we are Allāh’s and to Him we shall return.’ {2:156} and I heard, ‘For this did you supplicate.’ “

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan did not only urge others to work but he made of himself an example in this respect as well as in his refusal to take murīdūn who did not work but he went even further as in this story concerning ʾAbū-l-ʾAbbās related by Ibn ʾAṭāʾillāh, may Allāh sanctify their secret:

ʾAbū-l-ʾAbbās said, “Once I came to the Shaykh, may Allāh be pleased with him, and he said to me, ‘If you want to be one of my companions then don’t ask any body for any thing. If something comes to you without asking do not accept it.’

“I said to myself, ‘The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, used to accept gifts {*al-hadiyyah*} and said, ‘If something comes to you without asking, take it.’”

The Shaykh said, ‘It appears to me that you want to say, ‘But the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him used to accept gifts.’ and said, ‘If something comes to you without asking, take it.’

‘But Allāh said {meaning} to the Prophet, “I am warning you only by Revelation.” {21:45} When, then, has Allāh sent you Revelation {*waḥy*}?’

“If you are really following in the way of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, take as he used to take. He never took anything except that he took it to reward {*li-yathib*} the person who gave it and to indemnify {*yuʿawidahu*} him.”

This story is so very deep. We offer it to every official and influential person {*sāhib jāh*} and to all who accept bribes {*ar-rashwah*} in the form of gifts {*hadiyyah*} and to all of those for whom shayṭān has made beautiful the dishonest eating of people’s money.

The Shādhḍhulī viewpoint {*an-naḍḥriyyah*} with regard to wealth and poverty {*al-ghinna wa-l-faqr*} is that a thankful rich man {*al-ghanīyu-l-shākīr*} is preferable to a patient poor man {*al-faqīru-l-sābir*}. The reason for this is that patience or endurance {*ṣabr*} is a virtue solely in the life of this world {*ad-dunyā*} whilst thankfulness {*shukr*} is a virtue both in this world and the next.

We conclude this section dealing with struggle {*jihād*}, face to face combat {*kifāh*}, work {*ʿamal*} and gaining wealth {*ath-tharāʾ*} with this short tale,

Abū-l-Ḥasan said, “I once thought of choosing ‘the second rate’ or ‘the lowly’ {*ad-danī*} over, or in preference to, plentiful abundance {*al-kathrah*} but I abandoned this idea because I feared to be impolite with Allāh. I made supplication to my Lord, and I saw in a ruʾyā the Prophet Sulaymān, peace be upon him. He was sitting and around him were sitting his soldiers, and he revealed to them his bowls and pots as Allāh has described them,



# جَفَانِ كَالْجَوَابِ وَ قُدُورِ رَأْسِيَّتِ

WA JIFĀNIN KA-L-JAWĀBI WA QUDURI-R-RĀSIYĀT

*cauldrons like troughs and crucibles sunk in the earth*

{34:13}

“Then I was addressed, ‘Never choose anything with Allāh. If you do choose then choose slavery to Allāh following the example of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, when he said, ‘A messenger of servitude {‘abādan rasūlan}’. If you must choose then choose not to choose and escape from even the choice of no choice to the Choice of Allah.

“I awoke to hear, ‘Allāh has chosen for you to say,

اَللّٰهُمَّ وَسِّعْ عَلٰى رِزْقِيْ مِنْ دُنْيَايَ، وَ لَا تَحْجِبْنِيْ بِهَا عَنْ اُخْرَايَ،  
وَ اجْعَلْ مَقَامِيْ عِنْدَكَ، وَ نَاطِرًا مِنْكَ اِلَيْكَ، وَ ارْنِيْ وَجْهَكَ،  
وَ ارْنِيْ عَنِ الرَّوْيَةِ وَ عَنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ دُونَكَ،  
وَ اَرْفَعْ اَلْبَيْنَ فَيَمَا بَيْنِيْ وَ بَيْنَكَ،  
يَا مَنْ هُوَ اَوَّلُ وَ اٰخِرُ،  
وَ الظَّاهِرُ وَ اَلْبَاطِنُ،  
وَ هُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ

ALLAHUMMA WASI‘A ‘ALĀ RIZQĪ MIN DUNYA, WA LA TAḤJIBNĪ BIHĀ ‘AN ‘UKḤRĀI  
WA-Jā-‘AL MAQAMĪ ‘INDAK, WA NĀḌḤIRAN MINKA ‘ILAYK, WĀRINĪ WAJHUK  
WA WĀRINĪ ‘AR-RŪYATI WA ‘AN KULLI SHĀYIN DŪNAK,  
WA-R-FA‘A-L-BAYNI FĪMĀ BAYNĪ WA BAYNUK,  
YĀ MAN HUWA-L-‘AWWALU WA-L-ĀĀKHIR,  
WA-ḌḤ-ḌḤĀHIRU WA-L-BĀṬIN  
WA HUWA BI-KULLI SHĀYIN ‘ALĪM

Oh Allāh I beg you to expand my sustenance in life but I beg You not to make it a veil for the Other  
Make my station to be with You, and my vision a vision of You; let me see Your Face,  
and prevent me from seeing any thing other than You  
and lift {the veil} between me and You,  
Oh You who are the First and the Last,  
the Revealed and the Concealed,  
He who Knows all things.  
(57:3)

There is a third aspect to ‘Abū-l-Ḥassan’s face-to-face combativeness for which he is known among the people, and this is his readiness to make efforts in response to the exigencies or welfare {maṣlahah} of the people. In this respect he is very different from his student ‘Abū-l-‘Abbās.

In this context we have seen how, when in his early days while he was passing through Miṣr on his way for Ḥajj, he went to meet with the Sultān on behalf of the Tribes {*al-qabāʾil*} to request that the burden laid upon them be lifted. In this we saw that he was willing to place himself in danger and hardship on the behalf of people he considered to be oppressed, even when he didn't know them. Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh in the *Laṭāʾif al-Minan* says,

“Once a student of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan asked him to petition the Qāḍī, Tāju-d-Dīn, to increase his monthly stipend {*murattab*}. The Shaykh went to the Qāḍī who was honoured by the presence of the Shaykh in his office. He said to him, ‘Yā Sīdī, why have you come to me?’ The Shaykh replied, ‘On behalf of the student {and here he named him} so that you will increase his salary by ten dirhām.’ The Qāḍī said, ‘Yā Sīdī, He takes such and such from one place and this much and that much from a second place and this and that from a third place.’

The Shaykh said, ‘Yā Tāju-d-Dīn ! Do not say that a ten dirhām raise {*takthir*} is too much for a believer {*muʾmin*}. Allāh does not only reward a believer with the Garden {*al-jannah*} but He increases that reward by allowing the believer to see His Noble Face {*wajhu-l-karīm*}”<sup>64</sup>

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan's intercessions {*shafāʿāt*} increased as the number of oppressed {*al-muḍḥalūmīn*}, poor {*al-masākīn*}, needy {*al-ladhīna la jāhu lahum*} and weak {*aḍ-ḍaʿifāʾ*} turned to him for help. Their needs led him to frequent the rulers {*al-ʾumarāʾ*}, interceding with them, and defending {*mudāfiʾān*} and supporting {*muḥāmiyan*} the poor and the needy to the point that Ibn Daqqīq al-ʿĪd said, “The authorities were ignorant of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣḤ-ŠĤĀDHḌULĪ's real status due to his frequent needs and petitions to them.”

Commenting on the words of Ibn Daqqīq al-ʿĪd, Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh said,

“A task such as this is tiresome except to the morally ethical worshipper {*abdu mutkhalīq*} who operates in accord with the original framework of Allāh {*bi-ʾakḥlaqu-llāh*} and who by doing so imitates the Attributes of Allāh as a worshipper who has made subservient his ‘self’ {*nafs*} to the pleasure of Allāh {*marḍātu-llāh*} in full knowledge of the vast mercy and compassion of Allāh. In this way he deals with the other worshippers of Allāh in accordance with the way prescribed by the Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, when he said,

‘The merciful receive the Mercy of Allāh.  
Extend mercy to those who are on the earth and Heaven shall extend mercy upon you.’

We should not leave this aspect of the personality of our Shaykh without mentioning that ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan would never undertake any mission to help others without first petitioning Allāh. His supplications were marked by his slavery and were suffused with the fragrance of devotion.

These petitions served to remind him, and those who heard them, that all things are in the hands of Allāh and that in any case he was only an instrument for the Will of Allāh who had endowed and bequeathed upon him the bliss of serving people.

“He was called upon to defend one of the righteous souls {*aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*}, and prior to setting out he said,

<sup>64</sup> *wajh* = face, countenance; front, face, façade; personality; presence; meaning, significance, purport.

“Oh Allāh, make my bearing {*mashyī*} to be modest {*tawāduʿ*} before Your Face, a pursuit {*ʿibitaghā*} of Your Bèign Generosity {*li-fadlik*}, with help and backing {*nuṣrah*} from You and Your Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

“Beautify me with the beauty of the emigrants <sup>65</sup> {*al-muhājirūn*} who left money and wealth to journey to Your Kindness and Pleasure, to Your Victory and the Victory of Your Messenger. And truly they were the Veracious Ones {*aṣ-ṣādiqūn*}.

“Favour me {*khuṣanī*} with Your Love and Affection {*bi-l-mahabahtu wa-l-ithār*}, raise the veils of my heart by both day and by night, regulate my covetous self {*qanī nafsi ṣhaḥa*} and make me to be among the successful {*al-muflihīn*}.

“Forgive us and our brothers who have gone before us {*as-sabiqūn*} in faith. Remove from our hearts hatred or rancour {*ghalla*} towards the believers. Oh our Lord, You are the Kindness and the Mercy.”



This then was ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan: a man who was an enlightened scholar as we imagine an enlightened scholar to be, a true warrior {*mujāhid*} as we imagine the true mujāhid to be. A man who worked as a farmer and whose farms prospered and became numerous, a man who was an advocate for the poor, the needy and the oppressed going here and there, meeting with one man and another on their behalf, be it a ruler or a judge or the head of a school — but, though these represent aspects of his character, we have not yet spoken of another of his most basic traits.

The author of *Laṭāʾif al-Mīnān* says of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan,

“His travelling was extensive and his stopping places {*munāzilāt*} were always significant.”<sup>66</sup>

This true statement delineates one of the most basic traits of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan’s character. ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan was a strong and mindful {*mutabatilā*} worshipper and this led him to travel {*sāḥa*} extensively, as through travelling he was able to isolate himself from everything but Allāh {*liyakhlu ʿilla-llāh*}, to dissolve {*sāḥa*} his soulself {*nafs*} into purity {*taṣfu*}<sup>67</sup>, and to firmly root his concentration and gather himself totally into the Divine Vastness {*ar-riḥābu-l-ilāhiyyah*} totally surrendered, totally submitted and totally at peace, the slave who has surrendered all of his shackles and chains {*al-qiṣādāt*}: bodily, personally, mentally, spiritually and emotionally, to the One in Whose Hands is the Order. Surrendered with complete contentment {*raḍiyāh*}, surrendered with the ecstasy of a lover who has been totally extinguished {*fanā*} so that he neither sees, nor hears, nor feels, nor smells, nor tastes anything other than what it is and to Whom it is he has surrendered.

He travelled to the One Whom he had addressed in the *Hizb al-Barr* {Orison of the Earth},

<sup>65</sup> *al-muhājirūn*: the emigrants who left homes, families, wealth, businesses {which is to say virtually everything they ‘possessed’} and went to live in the Illuminated City {*al-Madīnatu-l-Munawwarah*} with the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him and the anṣar {the helpers} who were the people of that city who had made their covenant {*ʿahd*} with Allāh and had sworn allegiance to His Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

<sup>66</sup> This refers not only to his outer travels and stopping places but equally to his inner journeys.

<sup>67</sup> {*wa sāḥa lit-taṣufuwu nafṣahu*} the word *sāḥa* carries both the meanings of flowing running water, dissolution, clarification, fusing, travelling, journeying, roving while the word *ṣafā* or *ṣafwa* which means to become clear, limpid, unpolluted, and also settled and clarified is considered by many to be the true root of the term *taṣawwuf* connoting the purification of the self.

كَلَّا إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تُغَيِّبَنِي بِقُرْبِكَ مِنِّي  
حَتَّى لَا أَرَى وَلَا أَحْسَّ بِقُرْبِ شَيْءٍ وَلَا بِبُعْدِهِ عَنِّي

KALʾA ʾINNI ʾASʾALUKA ʾAN TUGḥAYYIBANĪ BI-QURBIKA MINNĪ  
ḤATTA LĀ ʾARĀ WA LĀ ʾAḥUSSA BI-QURBI ShAYʾIN WA LĀ BI-BUʿDIHI ʿANNĪ

Nay, I beseech You to conceal me by Your closeness to me  
Until I do not see and I do not feel the nearness of any thing or the remoteness of {any thing}

• إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ •

ʾINNAKA ʿALĀ KULLI ShAYIN QADĪR

*You are over all things Powerful*  
{3:26}

Abū-l-Ḥasan has reiterated for us what has been borne out over and over and history has confirmed,

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ الْقَوْمَ قَدْ حَكَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْذُّلِّ حَتَّى عَزَوْا

ALLĀHUMMA

ʾINNA-L-QAWMA QADĀ ḤAKAMTA ʿALAYHIM BI-Dḥ-DḥULLI ḤATTA ʿAZZŪ

Oh Allāh truly the Folk<sup>68</sup> have been judged against by humiliation until they were exalted.

وَحَكَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْفَقْدِ حَتَّى وَجَدُوا

WA ḤAKAMTA ʿALAYHIM BI-L-FAQḍI ḤATTĀ WAJADŪ

And judged against by total loss so that they might be found.

فَكُلُّ عِزٍّ يَمْنَعُ دُونَكَ  
فَنَسَأُكَ بَدَلَهُ ذُلًّا تَصْحَبُهُ لَطَائِفُ رَحْمَتِكَ

FAKULLU ʿIZZIN YĀMNAʿU DŪNAK

FANASʾALUKA BADALAHU DḥULLAN TAṢḤABUHU LAṬAʾIFU RAḤMATIK

Every honour bars {us} from You;  
So we beseech You instead for humiliation accompanied by Your most Tender Mercy.

<sup>68</sup> al-qawm = the folk = the ṣūfīs = muṭasawwifūn



وَكُلُّ وَجْدٍ يَحْجُبُ عَنْكَ  
فَنَسْأَلُكَ عَوْضَهُ فَقَدْ أَتَصَحَّبُهُ أَنْوَارُ مَحَبَّتِكَ

WA KULLU WAJĀDIY YAHJUBU ʿANK  
FANASʾALUKA ʾIWADĀHU FAQĀDAN TAṢĤABUHU ʾANWĀRU MAḤABBATIK  
Every presence conceals You  
So we beseech You to substitute a lostness accompanied by the Lights of Your Love.<sup>69</sup>

The purpose of ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan's travels were not for a change in the weather, neither were they for the gratification of strolling in gardens nor for discovering lost worlds. Rather their single purpose was uncovering Truth {*al-ḥaqq*}.

And when he uncovered Truth he would settle in a place and guide others to that Truth.

The Shaykh would, from time to time, speak of his travels. Here we quote from *al-Mafākhir al-ʿAliyah*.

“The Shaykh travelled to Tūnis when he was young. From thence he travelled to the Eastern Lands, entered al-ʿIrāq and made Ḥajj many times. ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan told the following story concerning the time when he was still at the early stages of the path:

“‘I had entered a cave {*magḥarah*} together with a friend and I was begging for arrival to the knowledge of Allāh {*al-wūsūl ʾilā-llāh*}. I used to say, ‘Tomorrow He will open us {*ghadan yaftah lana*} or the day after tomorrow He will open us.’

“‘A man entered whilst we were in the cave. We said to him, ‘Who are you?’ He replied, ‘I am a slave of the King {*ʿabdu-l-mālik*}.’ We knew that he was a walī of Allāh so we said to him, ‘How are you? {*kayf ḥāluk*}?’<sup>70</sup> He replied, ‘What do you think of those who say, ‘Tomorrow we shall be opened or the day after tomorrow we shall be opened?’ There is no authority {*wilāyah*} in this and there is not success {*falah*}. Oh my self worship Allāh for Allāh.’

“‘We then realized from whence he had come. We turned back {*fa-tubna* = repented} to Allāh and asked forgiveness {*fa-staghfirna*} and He opened us.’”

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan also says of his early journeys,

“Once I was roaming in the midst of one of my journeys and I was undecided as to whether to stay in the open grass lands {*al-barrārī*} or the wilderness {*qafara*}. I was also undecided as to whether I should concentrate on spiritual practices of obedience {*tāʿah*} and remembrance {*adhkār*} or return to the cities and houses and keep company with the scholars and the chosen ones {*al-ʾakhyār*}.

“I had been told that there was a walī who was living on the top of a nearby mountain and so I decided to go up to see him. I reached his place just after nightfall. I had just said to myself, ‘I shall not see him now,’ when I heard a voice from a cave saying:

<sup>69</sup> from the Ḥizb al-Barr, pp47-48, *Orisons*, Volume One of al-Madrasatu-sh-Shādhīdhulīyyah

“Yā Allāh. Some people have asked You to give them dominion over the creation. You gave them and they were content. Yā Allāh. I ask You to cause the creation to be against me until I find no shelter whatsoever except with You.” ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan continued, “I came back to my senses and said to myself, ‘Oh my soul {yā nafsī}, let me see from what Ocean this Shaykh gets *his* supply.’ When the morning came I entered into the cave and after giving salam said, ‘Yā sīdī, kayf ḥaluk?’<sup>70</sup> He said, ‘I complain to Allāh from the sweet coolness of contentment and submission as you complain to him from the heat of planning and choosing {al-tadbīr wa-l-ikhtiyār}’” ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan said, “Sīdī, my complaint about the heat of planning and choosing is understandable. I both feel it and taste it. But why do you complain about the cool sweetness of contentment and surrender?’ He said, ‘I fear their sweetness might cause me to become engrossed in *them* and thus far from Allāh.’ I said, ‘Sīdī. Last night I heard you saying, ‘Yā Allāh. Some people have asked You to give them dominion over the creation. You gave them and they were content. Yā Allāh. I ask You to cause the creation to be against me until I find no shelter whatsoever except with You.’ He said, ‘My son. Leave off saying ‘Give me dominion over {sakhārī}’ and say ‘Oh Lord be with me {yā rabbi kun lī}’ If He is yours can you lose anything? What is this cowardice?’”

In another tale he related, “I once met a man on my travels who said to me, ‘There is no more effective way to accomplish things by way of words, than saying, ‘There is no power or might save with Allāh, and hold fast to Allāh.’

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْأَعْتَصَامُ بِاللَّهِ

LĀ ḤAWLA WA LĀ QUWATA ʾILLA BI-LLĀHI WA-L-AʿTAṢĀMU BI-LLĀH

“So flee {firū} to Allāh and hold fast to Allāh, for the one who holds fast to Allāh is guided to the straight path. Then say,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، فَارَرْتُ إِلَى اللَّهِ، وَاعْتَصَمْتُ بِاللَّهِ،  
وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ، وَمَنْ يَغْفِرَ الدُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ،  
رَبِّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُكَ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ، إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُضِلٌّ مُبِينٌ،  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ قَوْلٌ بِاللِّسَانِ صَدَرَ عَنِ الْقَلْبِ،  
فَفَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَصِفَ لِلْمُلْكِ وَالْأَمْرِ

BI-S-MI-LLĀHI FARARTU ILA-LLĀH, WA-ʾTAṢAMTU BI-LLĀH;  
WA LĀ ḤAWLA WA LĀ QUWATA ʾILLA BI-LLĀH;  
WA MAN YAGḤFIRA-DḤ-DḤUNŪBU ʾILA BI-LLĀH;  
RABBI ʾINNNI ʾAʾUDḤUBIKA MIN ʾAMALI-ṢḤ-ṢḤAYṬĀN;  
ʾINNAHU ʾADDUWUN MUḌILIM-MUBĪN;  
BI-S-MI LLĀHI QAWLUN BI-L-LISĀNI ṢADARA ʾANI-L-QALBĀ;  
FAFURŪ ILA-LLĀHI WAṢIFA LI-L-MULK WA-L-ʾAMR.

<sup>70</sup> kayf ḥaluk literally ‘How is your state {ḥāl}?’

In the Name of Allāh I flee to Allāh, and cling to Allāh  
 — and there is no might nor power except with Allāh —  
 Who forgives our sins other than Allāh?  
 Oh my Lord I take refuge with You from the acts of Shayṭān.  
 Truly he is an enemy clearly astray.  
 By the Name of Allāh I speak with a tongue emanating from my heart.  
 I flee to Allah under {His} Authority and Order.

Then say to the shayṭān, “This is not what Allāh created you for. I believe in Allāh. To Him do I incline and upon Him do I trust and in Him do I seek refuge. Had not Allāh ordered me to seek refuge from you I would not have done so. Who are you that I must seek shelter with Allāh from you?”

And if there are many stories of his own travels there are also stories of those he sent travelling. We relate one just to give the taste of them. It was told by his servant, Shaykh ʿAbū-l-ʿAzāʾim Mādī:

“We were in Damanḥūr and had just completed the ʿaṣr {afternoon} prayer when Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan gave me a letter to take to the Shaykh and Jurist Fakḥru-d-dīn bin Fāʾizī in Alexandria, who needed it.

“I said to him, ‘Yā Sīdī — tomorrow — ʾinshāʾllāh I shall start out early in the morning for it is a day’s journey by horseback.’”

“He said to me, “You shall start out today and return to me with the reply — ʾinshāʾllāh.

“So I belted on the dagger which I had and went out and arrived directly in Alexandria in the shortest time possible. I delivered the letter and returned to him before the yellowing of the sun.

“On the way I passed the hills of Ḥājiz and I heard a confused sound there and the sound of someone walking and I imagined it to be bandits who would attack me at dusk. So I drew my dagger and waited. But I never saw anyone.

“Later when I was sitting before him, he smiled at me and said, ‘Oh Mādī you handled your dagger well in your encounter with the bandits. The sound you heard was the rustling of the angels’ [wings]. By Allāh you did not leave my hands until eighty thousand angels became answerable for you so that they might protect you by the order of Allāh until you reached Alexandria and returned to us.’”

The Shaykh also related the following, “Once when I was making {kḥalwāh} in a cave I said, ‘Oh Allāh, when shall I be your grateful slave?’ and I heard a voice reply, ‘When you don’t see any one other than your self who has been favoured.’ I replied, ‘Oh Allāh, how can I see that I have been favoured over all others? Have you not favoured the prophets, the scholars and the kings?’”

“The voice replied,

‘Without the prophets you would have not been guided.  
 Without the scholars you would have not been directed.  
 Without the kings you would have not been secure.  
 They are all my favour upon you.”

Dear reader, you should know that in truth and in reality all of the numerous and repeated journeys of our Shaykh were in truth a migration {hijrah} to Allāh, a flight and an escape. He had no goal other than to seclude himself with Allāh and to forget everything in order that his heart might be filled with the remembrance of Allah Who alone is.

His travel was a form of worship {*ibādah*}. This worship was not the worship that is the known and ordinary worship; the worship of obligatory duties {*al-fuirūd*} and the supererogatory {*nawāfil*} observances that surround them are well known to all and easily performed in the towns and cities. There is no need to make hijrah to perform them. ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan's goal was the emptying of the heart so that it might be filled by Allāh. For this there must be hijrah.

Among the people there are those who migrate in search of the world or in search of wives or other things. How many among the people migrate for Allāh and His Prophet and to Allāh and His Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him?

وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرْغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً  
وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ  
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

WA MAN YUHĀJIR FĪ SABĪLI-LLĀHI  
YAJID FI-L-ʾARḌI MURĀGḤAMA KATHĪRAW-WASAʿAH  
WA MAN YAKḤRUJ MIM BAYTIHI MUHĀJRAN ʾILA-LLĀHI WA RASŪLIHI  
THUMMA YUDRIKAHU-L-MAWTU FAQADĀ WAQAʿA ʾAJRUHŪ ʿALA-LLĀH:  
WA KĀNA-LLĀHU GHĀFURĀR-R-RAḤIMĀ

Who ever migrates in the Way of Allāh will find many places of refuge and abundance in the earth  
and whoever goes out of his house an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger  
and then death overtake him his reward is with Allah.

And Allāh is All Forgiving All Mercy Full

{4:100}

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan's hijrah was made out of devotion {*taḥanuthan*} in search for purity {*aṣ-ṣafāʾ*} and through self discipline with the aim of dissolving the veil between Allāh and His Wishes.

His desire was to become tied {*yartabiṭ*} to the Truth so he trained {*yarawid*} his soulself to that end. He trained that he might attain mastery of his self {*nafs*}, his covetous desires {*shāwātihi*}, his will power {*irādatahu*} and his volitions {*mashīʾatahu*}.

He said, "No slave will reach {*yaṣl*} Allāh whilst he has within himself any covetous desires or any personal volition".<sup>71</sup> and went on to say, "If you want to get connected to Truth then break out {*fatabaraʾ*} of your self and exit from your power {*haulik*} and your strength {*quwatik*}."

He wanted to directly witness {*yashhad*} Allāh: he wanted to witness the theophanic epiphany {*mutajalīyan*} in the sphere of form for Allāh, praised be He, unveils {*yatajalla*} knowldeg of His Being to people according to the strength of their purity and it was ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan's ardent desire to arrive to the purity of the furthest station {*al-aqsa*} that can be reached by the travellers {*as-sālikūn*}.

For this he secluded himself on the mountain of Zagḥwān. For this he journeyed in search of the Quṭb and for this he spent sleepless nights praying in the wilderness or on the edges of small villages and distant valleys. How

<sup>71</sup> *aṭ-Ṭabiqāt al-Kubrī* by aṣḤ-ṢḤARĀNĪ



many caves saw him in deep supplication to Allāh, with his only view annihilation {*fanā*} in Allāh that he might take, insofar as possible, the form beloved by Allāh and receive Divine illumination?

Abū-l-Ḥasan says, “Those who are ascertained {*al-muḥaqqiqūn*} by the direct witnessing {*yashhadū*} desire to behold nothing else other than Allāh the Most High. They are ascertained by the direct witnessing of His endless eternity {*al-qayūmiyyah*} and the descent of His enduring perpetuity {*ad-dayūmīyah*}.

This is the true meaning of what is called by the ṣūfiyyah, ‘*waḥdat al-wujūd*’ {Unity of Being or Unity of Existence} and it was this that was the goal to which Abū-l-Ḥasan sought to arrive — to arrive at spiritual knowing {*maʿarifah*}, to have knowledge by tasting {*dḥawqah*}, and to be ascertained by the final unraveling and solution {*ḥālāh*}.

When all of that had been fulfilled in the course of his travels and his retreats *then*, and only-then, did he return to people in order that he might guide them to Light and Mercy and Knowledge.

To complete this chapter on the personality of our Shaykh, we give an example of the impact that ‘*ibādah*’ {acts of worship} had upon him which shows how these acts rose out of his profound absorption {*kḥushuʿa*} in the prayer and awed adoration {*taʿadhīm*} of Allāh and His Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him. He understood that any diminution in the relationship between Allāh and himself arose through the insufficiency of his own self and inability to arrive at the correct degree of surrender to the Presence of Allāh.

On page thirty we related one story of the visit of Abū-l-Ḥasan to al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah. Here we relate another slightly different version of the same story.

“When he had arrived at al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, may Allāh add to its honour and glory, he stood at the inviolable door {*bābu-l-ḥaram*} from early morning ‘till mid-day bare headed {*uryānu-r-raʿsi*} and barefoot {*ḥafi-l-qadamayn*} asking permission {*ʿidhn*} from the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, to enter. He was asked why he continued standing and waiting. He replied, “I am waiting for permission in accord with the words of Allāh,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ

YĀĀʾAYUHĀ-L-LADĤĪNĀ ʾĀĀMANŪ  
LĀ TADKĤULŪ BUYŪTA-N-NABIYĪ ʾILLA ʾAN YUʾDĤANA LAKUM

*Oh You who believe.  
Do not enter the houses of the prophet until you are granted permission.  
{33:53p}*

He then heard a call coming from the Noble Garden {*ar-rawdatu-sh-sharīfah*} <sup>72</sup>. ‘Oh ‘Alī, come in.’ and he entered and stood in front of that Noble Garden saying, ‘Peace be upon you, oh Prophet, and the Mercy of Allāh and His Blessings. Benedictions of Allāh be upon you, oh Messenger of Allāh, and Abundance and Increase and Resplendent Brilliance. The most exalted of Benedictions be upon you, oh you who are from the Pure Prophets. I bear firsthand and direct witness, oh Prophet of Allāh, that you did truly voice the Message, gave sincere advice to your community, and worshipped your Lord until certainty reached you and that you truly are as Allāh has described you,

<sup>72</sup> *ar-rawdatu-sh-sharīfah* {the Noble Garden} is an area in the Masjid of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him that corresponds to the area that, in his-day, existed between the door of his house and the pulpit {*mimbar*} from which he gave the Friday speech. He declared, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, that this area now known as *ar-rawdatu-sh-sharīfah* is a portion of the Heavenly Garden {*al-jannah*} manifest here upon the earth.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ  
عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

LAQADĀ JĀĀʾAKUM RASŪLUM MIN ʾANFUSIKUM  
ʿAZĪZUN ʿALYAHI MĀ ʾANITUM  
ḤARIṢUN ʿALAYKUM BI-L-MUʾMINĪNA RAʾUFUR-R-RAḤĪM

*There has come to you a prophet from amongst your selfs.  
Grievous to him is your suffering; anxious is he over you,  
gentle to the believers, mercy full.*

{9:128}

“Benedictions of Allāh and His Angels and His Prophets and His Messengers and the Family of the Heavens and the Earth be upon you, oh Messenger of Allāh, and Peace be upon you, oh Companions of the Messenger, oh ʾAbū Bakr, oh ʿUmar<sup>73</sup>, and Mercy and Blessings. May Allāh reward you for your deeds on behalf of ʾIslām and its community {*ummah*} in the form of the best of rewards granted to any of the *kḥulafāʾ* upon their death. You were faithful to Muḥammad, blessings and peace be upon him, and you followed him in bestowing justice to and benevolence on his community after he had died. Allāh has rewarded you by accompanying him in the Garden, and we pray that the Mercy of Allāh be with you, and He is the Best of those that show Mercy.

I bear direct witness in front of You, oh Allāh, in front of you, oh Messenger of Allāh, in front of you, ʾAbū Bakr and ʿUmar and in front of you, oh Angels ascending and descending on this Noble Garden of the Rawdah that there is no deity except Allāh and that He has no partner. I bear direct witness that Muḥammad is the Slave of Allāh and His Messenger and is the Seal of the Prophets {*kḥātimu-n-nabīyyīn*}, Leader in Prayer and the Master {*imām*} of all the Prophets and Messengers, peace be upon them all. I bear direct witness that everything that he has brought me in the way of orders {*ʾamr*}, and counsel {*naḥī*}, and information {*akhḥbar*} about what is and what is not, what has been and what will be, is all undeniably true beyond doubt {*shakk*} or dispute {*ʾamtarāʾ*}.

“I admit to all my wrong doings whether by glimpse or thought or will or deed. All that I am is Yours. If You wish to remove them or forgive me for anything in the way of faithlessness, hypocrisy, innovation, misguidance, faults of any kind or any form of impoliteness from me towards You or Your Prophets and Messengers or Your Friends be they Angels or Humans or Jinn; then this forgiveness is with You. “I bear direct witness that even with all that by which I have been favoured yet still I have been unjust to my self. I beg you Oh Allāh, grant me that which You have granted Your Friends {*ʾawliyāʾik*}. You are Allāh, the Sovereign, the Grantor, The Generous, the Forgiver, the Mercy Full.”

This then is ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan.: handsome in appearance, elegant in manner, a rider of beautiful horses. Tough with himself and straight in regard to the ‘ḥallal’ and ‘ḥaram’ but not austere in his provenance. A true scholar {*al-ʿālim*} in his knowledge and profundity {*ʾaʿamuqah*}. A mujāhid seeking victory with the army on the field of battle in hand to hand combat. A hard working farmer personally involved in cultivation, planting and harvesting. A devoted worshipper whose worship brought him ‘near’ {*qurb*}; a ‘nearness’ he explained as “invisibility {*al-ghaybah*} through nearness due to the sublime proximity of the Near.”

<sup>73</sup> ʾAbū Bakr and ʾUmar, the first two successors {*kḥilafayn*} of the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, are buried in the same area and it is customary to greet them, may Allah be content with them, after the Messenger.

ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Shādhīdī was beloved by Allāh as the image {*yumathīl*} of a Muslim who is an example to every one in the best community ever brought forth for humanity.<sup>74</sup>

Because he was who he was and what he was, many have written about him in praise and recognition. The author of *al-Mufākḥir al-ʿĀliyyah* wrote, “Among those ʿawliyāʾ and ʿulamāʾ in his time, and among those who have come after him, who have remembered him are: Shaykh Ṣafīu-d-Dīn Ibn Abī-al-Manṣūr aṣḥ-Shādhīdī in his *Risālah* {Message}, who praised him highly due to the level of his spiritual knowledge {*maʿarifah*}, Shaykh ʿAbdu-llāh bin an-Nuʿmān who attested to his Station as the Quṭb, Shaykh Quṭbu-d-Dīn al-Qastilānī called him the greatest shaykh he had met in *Jumalat min Liqayah min al-Mashhāyikh* {Collected Encounters with the Great Masters}, Shaykh Tājū-d-Dīn bin ʿAṭāʾillāh as-Sakandarī in *Laṭāʾif al-Minan* {The Merciful Endowments}, Shaykh Sirāju-d-Dīn al-Mulaqan in *Tabaqāt al-ʿAwliyāʾ* {Stories of the Friends}, Shaykh Jalālu-d-Dīn as-Sayyūṭī in *Ḥassana al-Muḥāḍarah* {The Beauteous Lectures}, Sīdī ʿabdu-l-Wahāb aṣḥ-Shʿaranī in *at-Tabaqat al-Kubrah* {The Higher Degrees}, Sīdī al-Manāwī in *al-Kawākib ad-Durriyyah* {The Planets of Pearl}.”

al-ʿImām al-Būṣīrī, the author of the blessed *Burdah* {The Mantle} and a student of Shaykh ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, may Allāh sanctify their secret and perfume their resting places, wrote

As for the Way of al-ʿImām aṣḥ-Shādhīdī, it is so clear to the one who is guided.

Take even one step following him if you do you will help your self.

The Pole of his time, the Succour {*al-ghawth*} and the Leader {*al-ʿimām*}.

The eye of being, the tongue of the secret presence.

He went beyond all and the splendour of his endeavours lingers behind.

If perchance you pass his grave and catch a perfumed zephyr wafted from the cool sand.

Say, “Peace be upon you, oh ocean of kindness, Ocean of knowledge, our murshīd, our guide.

Shaykh Ibn ʿAṭā mentions some of those whom he met and upon whom he had a profound spiritual impact: “Many came to Allāh on the hand of the Shaykh; some of them stayed in the West like Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Ṣaqalī, a great one from aṣḥ-Ṣiddīqīn, and also Sīdī ʿAbdu-llāh al-Ḥabībī who was a great walī. Others followed him to Miṣr. Foremost among them is our Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās Shihābu-d-Dīn ʿAḥmad bin ʿUmar al-ʿAnsārī al-Mursī, may Allāh be content with him, and others like al-Ḥajj Muḥammad al-Qurṭubī, and Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Bijʿānī and Abū ʿabdu-llāh al-Bijʿānī and al-Wajḥanī and al-Jazārī. Some of them met him in Miṣr such as Shaykh ʿAbdu-llāh bin Manṣūr known as Makīnu-Dīn al-ʿAsmar, Shaykh ʿAbdu-l-Ḥakīm, and aṣḥ-Sharīf al-Būnī, and Shaykh ʿAbdu-llāh al-Laḳānī, and Shaykh ʿUṭhmān al-Burbījī, and Shaykh ʿAminu-Dīn Jibrīl.

For each one there was knowledge {*ʿulūm*} and secrets {*ʿasrār*} and followers who took from them.

<sup>74</sup> “The best community ever brought forth for humanity. Enjoining the honourable and forbidding the indecent {3:110}.”

## THE PRACTICE OF KITĀB & SUNNAH

ʿIslām brought many commandments {*takālīf*} for the reformation {*islāh*} of society and the individual. These commandments, as the word suggests <sup>75</sup>, bring with them some hardship to those who have not directly experienced or tasted {*lam yaṭadḥawāqū*} the connection to Allāh {*aṣ-ṣilah bi-llāh*}.

Because there are genuine hardships involved in carrying out these orders of Allāh, many people have sought to get rid of them by various and diverse means including mis-leading interpretation or distorted exegesis {*at-taʿwīlātu-l-munḥarīfatu*} or by straying to the path of apostasy {*ilḥād*} or deviant {*murūq*} heterodoxy.

One of the most perverse of these deviations is the claim on the part of some to have arrived {*wuṣūl*} at a degree or station of grace in which the 'Divine Orders' no longer apply to them. This is a trap of ṣhayṭān and one that has been attacked by the leaders in ṭaṣawwuf over the centuries. Among those who have strongly attacked this notion was Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhī ulī.

He was constant in his ordering and urging {*yaḥuth*} adherence {*ittibāʿ*} to the Qurʾān and Sunnah.<sup>76</sup> He pointed out that any deviation from the Qurʾān or the Sunnah meant following ṣhayṭān. In this context he said, and may Allāh be pleased with him, "There is no *karāmah* {wondrous work} more exalted than the *karāmah* of sure faith {*al-ʾīmān*} and adherence to the sunnah. Whoever has been given these two and yearns for something more is a liar who counterfeits {*muftarin kadḥdhāb*} the Words of Allāh and ignorant of knowledge {*al-ʿalim*} and righteousness {*al-ʿaml bi-ṣ-ṣawāb*}. He is like unto one who was honoured by beholding the King and then, feeling content, left to look after beasts of burden {*ad-dawābb*} and to seek the satisfaction with moral dissolutes {*kḥalʿu ar-riḍā*}."

He said, "If a faqīr is not present at the five prayers in congregation {*al-jamāʿah*} he is a person of no importance as a traveller {*as-sālik*}." As for the one who calls to Allāh {*ad-dāʿiyah*}, "If he calls to the Way of Allāh in a way that is different from the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, he is not a *dāʿī* {caller} but rather he is a *bidāʿ* {a heretical innovator}."

Allāh has said in al-Qurʾān {the meaning of which is}, "Truly a fixed time for the prescribed rites of worship {*aṣ-ṣalāh*} has been enjoined upon the believers." {4:103} Thus every time has its specific work and every work its limited time. Real implementation demands that you not delay a work beyond its time. ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan says, "Do not delay that which is incumbent {*tāʿāt*} upon you from its time to another time else you be punished by missing it due to your misjudgment of time.

<sup>75</sup> *taklīf* pl *takālīf* = burdening, bothering, troubling, inconveniencing, commissioning, charging, authorization; commandment of Allāh; burden, annoyance, nuisance, bother; trouble, inconvenience, discomfort; fuss, ado; formalities, ceremonial of courtesy, ceremony; expenses, expenditure, burden, outlay, costs, charges, overhead; taxes, imposts, duties.

<sup>76</sup> *Kitāb wa Sunnah* = The Book and the Practice. The Book is al-Qurʾān and adherence to it consists in scrupulously following what Allāh has ordered and recommended whilst abstaining from what He has condemned. The Practice is the Way of Life lived by the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, and consists of scrupulously seeking to put into the practice of one's own life both the spirit and the letter of the Way of the Prophet. Both of these are in accord with the injunction in al-Qurʾān, "Obey Allāh and His Messenger" {3:32} [and fifteen other places] and "whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allāh" {4:80}. This latter being very important to understand in view of the many groups both in the West and the East who have sought to do away with the Practice of the Sunnah in favour of adherence solely to the Book. Even more pernicious are the various pseudo-ṣūfī groups, especially in the West, who seek altogether to dispose of both Qurʾān and Sunnah.



“Each time has its share of goodness and Allāh has rights over you due to His sustaining of you.<sup>77</sup> That ‘Umar, may Allāh be pleased with him, delayed the time of the single odd prayer {*al-witr*} to the latter part of the night was a constant practice of his allowed to him by Allāh<sup>78</sup>. How do you imagine your self like him when you are lazy, lustful {*mushtahin*} and unmindful {*al-ghaflah*} of vision {*al-mushahadah*}. Never!”

Many people are seduced by their desires to taste certain types of mis-leading and occult knowledge. They concentrate on them to the point that they are led away from Qur’ān and Sunnah and the knowledge becomes a veil between the slave and Allāh. To those who find themselves in such a situation ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan gives the following advice, “Any science or knowledge that is preceded by self pride {*al-khawātir*} and appeals to your nafs, discard even if it is correct. Take the knowledge with which Allāh has endowed the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, and follow him or the kḥulafā’ or the companions or those who followed them {*at-tābi‘īn*} or the Imāms who are known by their righteousness. This way you will surely be saved from doubts {*ash-shukūk*}, suspicions {*adh-dhunūn*}, illusions {*al-awhām*} and the call to misleading guidance and twisted truths.”

From time to time you will find a person who alleges that he has reached such a degree {*ad-darajah*} in the love of Allāh that he has received a dispensation from carrying out the prescribed duties and orders. To these ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan says, “I heard a call, — ‘If you seek My blessing then fulfil your duties and do not rebel.”

One piece of sure advice from ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan for anyone to takes the Way {*aṭ-ṭariqah*} is: “If your spiritual insight {*kashf*} contradicts Qur’ān or Sunnah then hold on to the Qur’ān and Sunnah and leave aside the kashf. Say to your self {*nafs*}. ‘Allah the Exalted vouchsafed to you the infallibility {*al-iṣmah*} of the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Kashf is not so warranted, neither inspiration {*ilham*} nor vision {*mushāhadah*}.”

The conclusion that ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan reached in these matters was, “Cease arguing with your Lord and you will become a *muwwāḥid* {monotheist}; act, relying with full confidence in the law {*sharī‘ah*}, and you will become a *sunnī*.<sup>79</sup> Combine the two and you will become a *muḥaqqiq* {one who has become certified in the Truth. ie; a true ṣūfī}.



<sup>77</sup> A key understanding. The *Dīn* is not a religion as such but rather it as a ‘debt’ between the slave and his Lord which must be paid. The prime linguistic root of *Dīn* is *dāna* = to take out a loan, to be a debtor, to owe, to be subject. Thus to fulfill the prescribed and commanded ‘rites’ incumbent on the slave is the pay back, as such, to He who lent the precious loan which is the experience of being which we call life, in the course of which we may fulfill the purpose of our being both through worship on a temporal plane and on the plane of eternity through the remembrance of the events of the day of the covenant {*yawm ‘alastu bi-rabbikum*} [7:172] and living in accord with that realization.

<sup>78</sup> A supererogatory prayer of a single *rak‘ah* and accompanied by supplication {*qunūt*} usually prayed after the evening {*ish‘ā*} prayer but delayed by the Kḥalifah ‘Umār until the middle watches or even the late watches of the night.

<sup>79</sup> *Sunnī* = one who follows the customary practice habit and rule of the majority of the Muslims and also holds to the same structure of belief {*‘aqidah*} held by the majority. Literally it means one who follows in the practice {*sunnah*} of the Prophet, the peace of Allāh and blessings be upon him.

## PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF ALLĀH

Ibn ʿAṭā Allāh defines the view of the ShādhDhULĪ School on this subject in the following way:

“If the being of any thing that exists {*al-kāʾināt*} is so apparent just by the nature of its being to the degree that it does not require proof {*dalīl*} for its being, then the First Being scarcely needs proving.”<sup>80</sup>

This idea {*al-fakarah*} is a return to the correct path in regard to what has been called “Establishing the Existence of Allāh” or “Verifying the Being of Allāh” {*ithbati wujūdu-llāh*}.

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan has, at various times, drawn the attention of his murīdūn to his thoughts on this subject. He says, “How can we know the Being of the Knower Himself who possesses all knowledge that can be known? How can we prove by means of some ‘thing’ the One whose Being precedes the existence of any ‘thing’?”<sup>81</sup>

“When we behold Allāh with the eye of Faith {*ʾimān*} we are saved from the necessity of finding a proof. We do not see any ‘other’ creation. Is there some ‘thing’ in the universe co-existing along with Allāh as the Sovereign Truth {*al-māliku-l-ḥaqq*}? It would be like an atom of air that when you tried to grasp it you would grasp no thing.”

“What is so very strange is {the idea that some people have} that the creation should of necessity somehow lead to Him or point to Him. Is the creation so much more visible than He so that it should ‘reveal’ Him?”

“How can creation reveal Him when it is He who revealed it? “How can creation offer proof for His Being when it is His Being that is the proof for creation?”

The direction of these thoughts on the subject by the Shaykh which he communicated to his murīdūn were widely circulated by Ibn ʿAṭā Illāh:

“Those who seek proof {*dalīl*} and evidence {*burhān*} for the existence of Allāh are commoners in relation to the People of Sighting and Eye-witnessing {*ahli-sh-shuhūd wa-l-ʿayān*}. Those who have ‘seen’ the overwhelming manifest visibility of Truth reach to the degree that no proof whatsoever is required for them to certify the Truth of the Existence and Very Being of Allāh. How or why would they need ‘proof’ when He has created all possible proofs in so far as He has created every thing and that, in reality, He is in His Being the proof of all being? How can we verify that which, by its very Being, verified every thing and made being itself as such, possible?”

By travelling along such a line of thought ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan returned his followers to the true Way of ʾIslām in regard to this subject.

The existence of Allāh is so clear and manifestly visible {*ʾaḍḥur*} that it needs no proof. The sanctification {*taqādis*} or hallowing of Allāh, praised be He, does not permit the believer to imagine that he must prove the existence of Allāh. The act of adoration, indeed the very adoration of Allāh, which is integral with the sure faith of the believer elevates the believer, and prevents his descent into deviation {*al-ʾinḥirāf*}.

In reality {*ḥaqīqah*}, the seeking after proofs of the existence of Allāh is a deviation from the Way of ʾIslām.

If ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan directed his murīdūn to follow along this route {*al-nahj*} he is himself precisely following the Qurʾān, in which it is revealed that all of the Messengers and Prophets, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon them, have sanctified, adored and glorified Allāh without in any way questioning His Being nor seeking a proof for His Existence.

<sup>80</sup> *al-Laṭāʾif al-Minan* p 27 {the French printing}

<sup>81</sup> *al-Laṭāʾif al-Minan* p 26 {the French printing}

Imām ash-Shādhdhulī followed this path.

If his ideas seem obscure or abstruse {ghāmid}, they do only to the degree that the heresy of seeking to prove the existence of Allāh in the present time when the ‘doctrines’ of the ‘new’ criticism, structuralism, semiotics, deconstructionism have gained such a wide circulation, and so deeply permeated even deeply religious circles, that some may perforce inquire, “Is Abū-l-Ḥasan correct in his views?”

In order that we may clarify Abū-l-Ḥasan’s view and because the subject itself attracts the attention of so many, we shall elaborate on the subject in the hope that Abū-l-Ḥasan’s guidance may prevail and people will return to sound understanding.

Abū-l-Ḥasan’s claim {haq} upon us, since we are writing about him, deserves that we elaborate one of his ideas, which due to the times, has not been properly understood or valued.

When the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, began to openly declare the Message after three years in which it was secret, he did not set about trying to prove the existence of Allāh. Rather he began by offering proofs of his own veracity {bi-l-barhana ‘ala ṣidqihī huwa} and challenged the Arabs of Makkah on the basis of his truthfulness.

When the Angel {Jibrīl}, peace be upon him, took him unawares and the Revelation first began to descend, neither the Angel nor the Revelation began by proving the existence of Allāh. It began by The Order:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

IQĀRA BI-S-MI RABBIKA-L-LADHĪ KHĀLAQ

*Recite in the Name of your Lord Who created*

{97:1}

The whole first century of the Hijra passed without there being any evidence of a single person implicitly or explicitly seeking a proof for the existence of Allāh and most of the second century passed without it ever becoming a subject for inquiry and research {al-baḥth}. This was because the whole question of the existence of Allāh was a deep intuitive understanding shared by the believers. It was not a point of discussion either for proof or refutation.

The existence of Allāh was simply one of the axioms among religious circles that was never discussed because it was self evident truth.

Indeed had some one put the point up for discussion they would have been dismissed as one meddling with their imān and deviant in their dīn. Allāh simply cannot be so obscure or opaque {ghāmid} as to require proof for His Being by His beings for truly Allāh is exalted beyond that.

If you read the Qurʾān or if you read the at-Tawrah {Torah} or al-Injīl {the Evangel or Gospels} even in their present forms, you will never find within them a need to prove that Allāh exists; and you will find that the need for or seeking of proof has no place in them and simply does not constitute a valid object for religion or even a subject for religious discourse.

Allāh mentions in the Qurʾān that even the polytheists {in Makkah} knew what was self evident,

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ

WA LAʾIN SAʾALTAHUM-MAN KHĀLAQA-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-ʾARḌA  
LAYAQŪLUNA-LLAH

*If you ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' They say, 'Allāh.'*  
{31:25}

Thus even the mushrikūn {polytheists or idolaters} of those days, warped in their belief as they were, knew the simple answer to a simple question, 'The Creator is Allāh'.

Religions have never been sent down to prove the existence of Allāh. They are sent for the rectification of the Way of Belief {*li-taṣāḥiha al-ʿitiqād*} in Allāh or to correctly set forth before the people the Way of Tawḥīd {*unicity*}.

The various āyāt which some people think were revealed in order to prove the existence of Allāh are not at all of this nature. Rather they are revelations of the Exaltedness {*ʿadḥamah*} of Allāh, the Sublime Majesty {*jalālahu*} of Allāh or His Greatness {*kubariyāhu*} as well as the Utter Control {*haymanah*} that His Integral and Complete Perfection {*al-kāmilah*} exerts throughout the worlds {*al-ʿālam*} which escapes nothing and which nothing escapes, either large or small.

The 'signs' were revealed to us in order that we might be led to that total surrender {*islām*} whereby one neither begins nor desists from any action other than by His Name and with His Permission nor does one enter into any way {*tariqah*} other than it is His Way; the Way of Allāh Most High.

As we have said, the first and most of the second century of the Hījah went by and the people continued along this Way and by these means they entered the philosophy of the Greeks {*al-falsafatu-l-yūnāniyah*} which is a pagan {*wathāniyyah*} philosophy that is a product of the intellect {*al-ʿaql*} and not of revelation {*al-wahī*}, and it is precisely this difference that sets it apart from the Revealed Heavenly dispensations of ʾIslām sent down in and over time to the various Prophets, peace be upon them all.

Any mode of thought that emanates from the intelligence rather than revelation in the realm of metaphysic {*ālam ma warāʾa at-ṭabīʿah*} or doctrine {*al-ʿaqidah*} is dualistic. It is thought {*fikrah*} that has within it no compelling truth; a thought not worthy of existence in the realm of doctrine because that realm is the sole provenance of Allāh, Who has clarified it on the tongues of the Messengers. Any interference from humanity in this realm is interference on the part of the 'unchosen' in the affairs of the 'chosen'.

It is an act of aggression and illicit usurpation within forbidden and sacred precincts.

The entrance into those precincts on the part of ordinary human beings should be in humility, surrender and submission to that which has come through Divine Revelation {*al-wahīu-l-ilāhī*}. Greek philosophy when it enters into the realm of doctrine is pagan. It is pagan when it seeks to affirm or proves the existence of 'God' and even when it manages to prove the existence of 'God' it is pagan.



It is pagan because its basis, its very foundation, is the deification of the human mind and it remains pagan or dualistic or polytheistic through and through whether it renders proofs for the existence of 'God'<sup>82</sup> or not.

Even when, intellectually, philosophy manages to arrive at a proof for the existence of 'God', there is no benefit in it because the 'mind' that proves can equally disprove for it has no grounding {*ithbatat*} but rather it remains always relative and, in the end, it is this same 'mind' or 'intellect' which goes about disproving 'God's existence'.

Thus there is no need for the hoopla and applause {*tanṭanah*} with which some<sup>83</sup> greet every legendary 'intellectual genius' {*abqariyatun fikriyatun*} in the East or the West who seeks to prove the existence of 'God' or, indeed, claims to have 'proven' the existence of 'God'.

Our belief is not based on human thought, no matter if it is the product of genius. There is no need for the believer to elevate any mental 'theorem' or construct in the realm of metaphysic whether the theorem is or is not consonant with his belief. The believer in his or her belief believes in the oneness of Allāh, the pre-eminence of Allāh, the guidance of Allāh and the directions of Allāh. He who holds fast to Allāh is led to the straight path. He who clings to Allāh then Allāh is his support.

All that is beyond the guidance {*al-hady*} of Allāh in the realm of the Dīn is duality and deviation.

The philosophy of the Greeks was humanistic and pagan. They sought to introduce {into their philosophy} reins or restraints {*lijāmān*} in order to curb or safeguard it {*yaṣimaha*} from mistakes {*al-khaṭāʾ*}. This 'rein' was Logic {*al-mantiq*} which resulted in further duality and which was not ultimately useful, for it did not serve to permit pagan thought to reach the correct goal {*aṣ-sawāb*}.

This system of philosophy has persisted throughout the centuries and remains with us till now with all of its pagan fruits of misguidance {*dalāl*} and fabulous superstitions {*kḥurāfāt*}.

The Greek nation {*ʿummaḥ*} is to be forgiven because no Heavenly Religion {*dīni munaza mina-s-samāʾ*} was revealed to them to which they could turn for guidance and direction and in this their situation was similar to that of Arabs of the Arabic heartlands {*al-jaziratu-l-ʿarabiyyah*} in the age of ignorance {*al-jāhiliyyah*}. In the absence of Heavenly Revelation the Greeks turned to the 'intellect' {*al-ʿaql*} which they deified, and with which intellect they sought to prove and disprove but in the end they were misled by it and in turn mislead others.

<sup>82</sup> A note on our use of the words 'God' or 'god'.

The reader will note that throughout our texts we always use the word 'Allāh' for which there is no corresponding word in English. It does not possess a plural and has never been used to refer to anything other than to the unimaginable Supreme Being. Indeed it is the Name by which that Supreme Being has deigned to designate Itself as such it has Power and Authority and exists by the Mandate {*suḫḫān*} of the Ineffable Being through Revelation. Whereas neither the word 'God' nor 'god' has neither mandate nor authority nor has it ever appeared in any Heavenly Revelation but is, rather, the product of, exactly as in the direction of the above thoughts of AḤM, human thought and intellect as well as indo-aryan philological determination as derived from *guth* = an object {which is to say a *thing*} of worship. The mere fact that this word can be read as 'God' or 'god' or even in the plural as 'gods' shows its provenance in paganism and polytheism.

<sup>83</sup> Especially amongst the 'modernist' school of Islamic 'thinkers' who delight in dragging in every obscure {or known} Greek, Roman, German, French, English and Russian 'philosopher' {many of whom the West now judges to be insignificant cranks} to prove that they proved 'God's existence' and so if they proved that 'God' exists then Allāh must exist and 'Islām can thus be justified and one can be, relatively, proud to be a 'thoroughly modern' or, at least, completely rational Muslim in the 20th century. A lower mirror level of this tendency is the 'pride' that some 'modern' Muslims take in the often spurious, but widely circulated, reports of 'conversions' to 'Islām by famous {or infamous in some cases} public figures such as Micheal Jackson or Jacques Costeau or Neil Armstrong. The reasoning here, a residue perhaps of the last two centuries of western domination, seems to be that if such 'famous' people have become Muslims then 'Islām must actually be something good and worthwhile and, hence, I {as a Muslim} am worthwhile and my religion is worthwhile.

When Christianity {*ad-diyāntu-n-naṣrāniyyah*} came it was to correct and clarify this situation. It, as with all Heavenly Dispensations, esteemed the existence of Allāh above and beyond any need for proof. Greek duality and paganism however steadily and stealthily infiltrated Christianity like a malignant microbe {*ka-mikrūb khabīth*} until it made the search for the proof of the existence of Allāh an avenue for research or a chapter in clerical theology {*al-ulūhiyātu-l-kanasī*} until Sacred Religious Thought {*al-fikratu-l-dīniyyatu-l-muqaddasah*} once again sank back down into the atmosphere of humanistic paganism.

When al-ʾIslām came it was to purify and complete {*kāmilan*} the Doctrine {*al-ʿaqīdah*} and to purify {*tazakīyah*} and perfect {*tāmat*} Belief. It promulgated, by the naked purity designated as “The Surrender” {*al-ʾislām*}, war against any form of humanistic intervention {*at-tadkhillu-l-bashrī*} into the Creed of Allāh and His Message.

Al-ʾIslām is unlimited and absolute {*muṭlaq*} surrender to Allāh, the Praised, the Exalted. As such it is total abandonment {*al-ʾistirsāl*} to the wishes of Allāh. For the human being is there really any other reference {*nasabah*} other than Allāh? For the believer can there really be any other state of affairs {*taṣarruf*}? If there were some other possible state of affairs or outcome would the believer still be a believer?

Total abandonment to what Allāh loves, complete and total self-surrender — this is al-ʾIslām — this is *the* Creed, *the* Religion {*ad-dīn*} — and there is no other Creed or Religion other than this nor shall any other be accepted from human beings as Allāh has clearly said,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

ʾINNA-D-DĪN ʾINDA-LLĀHI-L-ʾISLĀM

*Truly the religion with Allāh is surrender*  
{3:19}

and Allāh says further,

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

WA MAŶY-YABĀTAGhI GhAYRA-L-ʾISLĀMI DĪNAN FALAY-YUQBALA MINHU

*and who so desires a creed other than surrender<sup>84</sup> it shall not be accepted from him*  
{3:85}

The one who does not absolutely and completely submit and surrender without any restraint or making any exception {*muṭlaq*} to Allāh in respect of His Revelation {*waḥīhu*}, desires in fact, be it in the small things or the large, in accord with his own twisted thinking, a religion other than al-ʾIslām.

<sup>84</sup> *al-ʾislām* = to submit, to voluntarily surrender, submission; *ʾIslām* {people act}, submissive, one who surrenders to Allāh; Muslim, from *slm* = soundness, well-being, unimpairedness; peace; security, safety; a greeting {*as-salām*}; the All Peaceful; the Perfect — a Divine Attribute as in {59:23}

al-ʿIslām is objective orientation {*tawjīh*} and fundamental axioms {*mubādīʿ*}.

Part of that orientation is the ‘beingness’ or ‘existence’ of Allāh as a subject of ‘research’ {*al-baḥṭh*}. Thus, anyone who occupies themselves with the subject departs from Divine direction or orientation and enters into the human orientation which is other than the guidance that stems from voluntary self-surrender {*al-ʿislām*}.

The early Muslims took al-ʿIslām as an objective orientation {*tawjīh*} toward a certain goal and both accepted and acquiesced to the fundamental axioms {*mabādīʿ*} that were inherent within it. However beginning during the rule of the Khilāfah of Harūn ar-Rashīd in Bagḥdād (166-190 H = 786-809CE), and to a much greater degree during the subsequent Khilāfah of his son al-Maʿmūn in the eastern lands of Fāris {Persia}, Greek philosophy along with Muʿtazilite thought {rational theology} penetrated al-ʿIslām like a malignant cancer cell. The believers of that time eschewed this movement with utter distaste {*an-nufūr*} and aversion. In this, they were correct for neither was it possible to rectify the dialectic of religion with the natural {*al-fiṭrah*} logic of ʿIslām and infallible insight {*rāyatu-l-ʿismah*} nor was it possible to see the flag {*rāyah*} of the exalted Divine religion flying side by side with the banner of Aristotle {*ʿAristū*}, especially in the realm of doctrine {*al-ʿaqidah*}.

It was al-Maʿmūn who raised the flag of deviation and duality side by side with the flag of infallible guidance. The believers attacked {*ʿārad*}, refuting {*ʿiḥtajū*} this argument and making completely clear {*bayyanū*} that dualistic pagan thought {*al-waṭḥaniyyah*} was dualistic pagan thought even when it was in agreement with religious principle.

The pagan program grew strong and spread.

It began by asking for a visa and wound up claiming citizenship.

Praise be to Allāh that the basic doctrine: belief in Allāh and His Messengers and the Resurrection, was not polluted by pagan duality. What was contaminated, to a large extent, was the system {*al-manhaj*} and attitude {*an-nazʿah*} and the orientation {*al-ʿittijāh*} of research {*al-baḥṭh*} and the programs for research. This is not a simple matter, for it is research {and the educational system that supports it} that influences faith to a great degree.

Let us say that there is a great difference between basing yourself on Divine Revelation that you then seek to understand by dint of your reason and basing yourself on reason by dint of which you seek to understand Divine Revelation. Some people may not see the difference but it is huge. Either you see that Divine Revelation is directing the rational faculty {*al-ʿaql*} which is totally in surrender to that Divine Revelation, or you use the rational faculty or the mind to endeavour to interpret and understand the Divine Revelation and accept or take from it only what your mind or reason can comprehend, accept and affirm.

The first way is the way of the believers and the second, the way of the philosophers and pagans.

The pagan movement — the movement which seeks to prove or deny the existence of Allāh — allowed for complete deviation {*al-ʿinḥirāfu-l-kāmil*} and digression. So long as it was permitted to persist it reproduced itself and bred paganism on top of paganism.

Placing the existence or non-existence of Allāh as a question legitimately up for discussion permitted those with twisted reasoning and logic to pervert the religion of Allāh, to apostatise and practice atheism {*ilḥād*}. This was the first by-product.

The second was the weakening of faith. Merely by placing the topic of the existence {or non-existence} of Allāh up for discussion, as a subject for research, means placing belief in Allāh under doubt and suspicion.

If the subject of the existence {or non-existence} of Allāh is a legitimate subject for research, what else in the whole field of religion is not subject to doubt and suspicion?

In such an atmosphere faith, belief and certainty in the existence of Allāh will gradually weaken.

This is indeed what *has* happened to the Muslim community. Faith {*imān*} has been so weakened that in certain places among certain classes of people it has become almost non-existent {*maʿdum*}.

This is due, in great part, to the penetration by pagan research methodology into Islamic affairs {*qadāyā*} and their origins {*mābādī*} to the point where all of them became subject to scrutiny and research.

Once the very existence of Allāh has been brought under question is it then plausible that certainty {*al-yaqīn*} in any religious subject would endure untouched?

Once the very existence of Allāh has been made a matter of relativity, and belief a matter of personal outlook, is it then plausible that certainty {*al-yaqīn*} in any religious subject would endure untouched?

Forgive us, oh Allāh and return us to You.

We can say, however, that the dīn is preserved {*maḥfūdh*} in its self due to Allāh preserving the Book.

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

ʿINNA NAḤNU NAZZALNA-Dh-DhIKRA WA ʿINNA LAHŪ LAḤĀFIDhĪŪN

*Truly it is We who have revealed the Remembrance and truly We shall preserve it. ﴿١٥﴾*

{15:9}

Our complaint concerns the outlook, trend and method of research; the pagan, that is to say Greek, methodology that is used in research.

Once a great ‘knower’ {*al-ʿārif*} was asked for proof of the existence of Allāh. He said: “Allāh”. He was then asked about the mind or intelligence {*al-ʿaql*} to which he replied.

“Mind is limited and the limited only leads to the limited.” So,

قُلِ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

QULI-LLAH: ThUMMA DhARHUM FĪ KhAWḌIHIM YALʿABŪN

*Say: Allāh — Then leave them to their absorption in games.*

{6:91}





The great knower by Allāh {*al-ʿārif bi-llāh*} and ʾimām, Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh as-Sakandarī, who was both a leader in religious law {*ash-sharīʿah*} and spiritual truth {*al-ḥaqīqah*} wrote,



“How can it be imagined that any thing veils Him  
when He makes manifest every thing?

How can it be imagined that any thing veils Him  
when every thing manifests through Him?

How can it be imagined that any thing veils Him  
when He manifests in every thing?

How can it be imagined that any thing veils Him  
when He manifests to every thing?

How can it be imagined that any thing veils Him  
when He was manifest before any thing?

How can it be imagined that any thing veils Him  
when He is more manifest than any thing?

How can it be imagined that some thing veils Him  
when there in no thing besides Him?

How can it be imagined that some thing veils Him  
when He is nearer to you than any thing?

How can it be imagined that some thing veils Him  
when with out Him there is no thing?



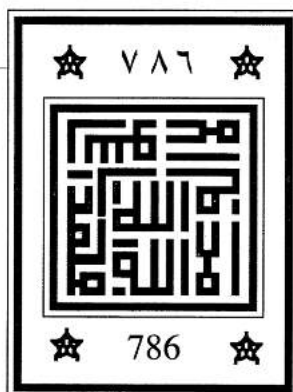
“There is a vast difference between he who proves by Him and he who seeks to prove Him.

He who proves by Him knows the Truth and he who seeks to prove Him is ignorant.”



“When was He absent so as to need a guide to find Him?

When was He distant so as to need creatures to lead to Him?”



## SPHERES IN THE NOBLE QURʾĀN

and Allāh says,

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَمَ  
الْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ  
مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣١:٢٧﴾

WA LAW ʾANNAMA FĪ-L-ʾARḌI MIN ShAJARATIN ʾAQLĀM  
AL-BAḤRU YAMUDDUHU MIM BAʿDIHI SABʿATU ʾABĤURIM  
MĀ NAFIDAT KALIMĀTU-LLAH: ʿINNA-LLAHI ʿAZĪZUN ḤAKĪM ﴿٣١:٢٧﴾

*Though all the trees in the earth were pens  
and the sea was ink - with seven seas more - to replenish it  
yet the Words of Allāh would not be exhausted — Truly He is the All-Mighty, the Wise ﴿٣١:٢٧﴾*

The secrets of the Qurʾān are infinite and cannot be encompassed by boundaries {*lā yaḥṣira hā ḥāṣir*} nor contained by anybody. Each person comprehends the secrets of the Qurʾān according to their knowledge.

There is no doubt however concerning the meaning of that which is demanded {*al-maṭlūb*} and ordained {*wūjūbā*} and that which is demanded to be renounced and forsworn {*tarakah*}. These are both clear and beyond doubt or complication.

There are also spiritual intimations {*al-ʾishārāt*}<sup>85</sup> and Divine favours {*at-tawjihātu-l-ʾilahiyyah*} to the heart and bestowal of insights {*al-baṣāʾir*} into the Noble Qurʾān which, though they can never be totally grasped, yet never do they fade with time. Fittingly, one of the great thinkers {*al-mufakirīn*} when asked as to what was the best explanation of Qurʾān, simply replied: — “Time.” {*az-zaman*}

These subtle spiritual awakenings of the heart and bestowals of insight flow and increase according to the degree that one’s slavery or devotion {*ʾubūdah*} to Allāh is actuated. As such, they are entrusted consignments {*at-tafwīd*} which never forbid the permitted nor permit the forbidden and in no way do they resemble the exegetics {*taʾwīlāt*} of the Bāṭiniyyah.<sup>86</sup> These are easily broken down in the light of the practice {*sunnah*} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and his companions, may Allāh be pleased with them, who thoroughly put the Divine Orders into the actual practice of the Dīn of Allāh in a most ideal way {*al-ʾuswah*} which was clearly defined and widely known. If anyone moves outside of that circle {*daʾirah*} in the Dīn they are mistaken {*mukḥṭiʾūn*}. Any exegetic that removes the ‘orders’ {*al-awāmīr*} outside of the realm of the sunnah is misleading.

<sup>85</sup> *al-ʾishārāt* = sign, motion, nod, wink, wave; gesture; signal; indications; allusion, hint, intimation; {silent} reminder; advice counsel, suggestion; instruction, order, command. from *shwr* = make a sign, signal, wink, point out.

<sup>86</sup> *al-Bāṭiniyyah* = ‘the Esotericists’; a Shīʿah sect opposed especially by Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī {*Tahāfut al-Fakāsifah* = Refutation of the Philosophers} for their extreme esotericism directed for the most part towards the un- or under-educated. Their system was based on a mis-understood Pythagoreanism coupled to radical interpretations of Qurʾānic āyāt. Adherents were also involved in a quest for a sinless or spotless {*maʾṣūm*} Master to be found living in the world to serve as their Guide.

The awakenings {*al-ʾishārāt*} we cite here are spiritual intimations {*al-ʾishārātu ruḥaniyyah*} which yield an ascension {*maʿāraj*} of the spirit {*ar-ruḥ*} which lifts human beings into proximity {*qurb*} to Allāh on the Upright and Straight Path {*ṭarīq al-ʾistaqāmah*}.

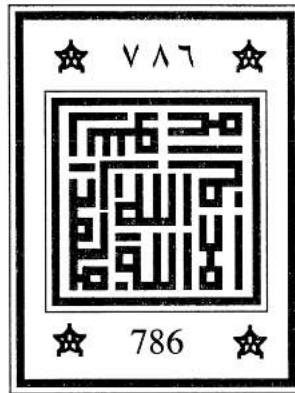
We have called these indicators ‘spheres’ {*ʾajwāʾ*} because for every walī there is a sphere which, while it does not conflict {*lā yatārad*} with the sphere of other ʾawliyāʾ, may yield a pure fragrance {*abirun zakki*} which differs from the pure fragrance radiating from his companion {*zamilahu*}.

No doubt the fragrances of the various flowers are all to be esteemed, but people, by their own nature, may be swayed by one fragrance or another.

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan did not interpret {*lam yufassir*} the Qurʾān in its entirety, neither did he explain {*lam yashrah*} the authentic collections of Bukḥārī and Muslim {*ṣaḥīḥ al-bukḥārī wa ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*}<sup>87</sup> nor have his biographers mentioned a great deal that he said with regard to Qurʾān and Ḥadīth.

We have tried — as best as we could — to gather pearls from here and there. We can not, due to their scarcity, classify them into sections or by their school or opinion {*bi-madḥhabiha*} or, indeed, into any real system of classification. Thus we have only followed our own taste in compiling and recording this collection, and we very much regret what has been lost.

It is as it is and they are such as they are and as such they do provide — at the very least — a clear indication of the fragrance of Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan’s sphere.



<sup>87</sup> Two of the six collections considered by the fuqaha to be correct {*ṣaḥīḥa*} collections of the sayings {*ahadith*} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. The others are the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, the Sunan of Ibn Mājah, the Sunan of Nasāʾī and the Ṣaḥīḥ of Tirmidhī. These are called *aṣ-Ṣiḥāḥ as-Sittah* {the Six Authentic Collections}. The Muwaṭṭaʾ of Imam Mālik is usually coupled with the Six canonical works to form a seventh, though strictly speaking it is not part of the canon.

1

Abū-l-Ḥasan was asked the meaning of:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing  
{1:1}

He replied, may Allāh be content with him : “It is the cessation of dissatisfaction”

2

If you desire truthfulness in your speech you should frequently read the sūrah that begins:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

ʾINNA ʾANZALNĀHU FĪ LAYLATI-L-QADR

Truly we sent it down on a Night of Desitny  
{97:1}

If you desire sincerity in all cases then you should frequently read the sūrah that begins:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

QUL HUWA-LLAHU ʾAḤAD

Say: Allāh He is One  
{112:1}

If you desire abundance in your provenance then you should frequently read the sūrah that begins:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

QUL ʾAʿUDhU BI-RABBI-L-FALAQ

Say: I take refuge with the Lord of the Dawn  
{113:1}

If you desire to be free from evil then you should frequently read the sūrah that begins:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

QUL ʾAʿUDhU BI-RABBI-N-NĀS

Say: I take refuge in the Lord of Humanity  
{114:1}



## 3

If suspicions and shayṭānic whisperings gather round you then say:

إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ . وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

ʾIY-YASHĤʾ YUDĤHIBĀKUM WA YAʾTI BI-KĤALQIN JADĪDā:  
WA MĀ DHĀLIKA ʿALA-LLĀHI BI-ʿAZĪZ

*If He wills He can remove you and bring a new creation — and that is no great matter for Allah*  
{14:19p & 20}

## 4

If you wish to be endowed with abundance in this life and the next then say:

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُوتِنَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ  
إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ

HASBUNA-LLAHU SAYUʾTINA-LLAHU MIN FAḌLIHI WA RASŪLUHŪ-  
ʾINNA ʾILĀ-LLĀHI RĀGHĪBŪN

*Allāh suffices us; Allāh provides from His Generosity and His Messenger.*  
*Truly to Allāh do we turn.*  
{9:59p}

## 5

Among the choicest benefactions {*mawāhib*} of Allāh are: Contentment in the unfolding of the Decrees {*al-qaḍāʾ*}; Patience in the midst of trials and tribulations {*balāʾ*}; Trusting in Allāh in adversity and calamity {*ash-shadāʾid*}; Resorting {*ar-rujūʿ*} to Allāh in disasters {*an-nawāʾib*}. Whoever attains to these four either as recompense for deeds or as an expansive opening {*bisāṭ*} stemming out of the struggle {*al-mujāhidah*} with the recalcitrant self in conforming to the pattern {*al-aqtadāʾ*} of the Prophetic Practice {*as-sunnah*} and in following the rightful leaders {*al-imāmah*} — he who does this is the sure and masterful friend of Allāh and His Messenger and the believers.

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ

WA MAN YATAWALLA-LLAHA WA RASŪLAHŪ WA-L-LADĤĪNA ĀĀMANŪ-  
FAʾINNA ḤIZBA-LLAHI HUMU-L-GĤĀLIBŪN

*Who ever makes Allāh his Friend and His Messenger and the believers,*  
*then they are the partisans of Allāh and they are the victors.* ☪  
{5:56}

He who enters into this treasure house {*kḥazaʾin*} has had bestowed upon him expanding love {*bisaṭu-l-maḥbbah*} and is the complete {*tamat*} friend {*walī*} of Allāh of whom He said,

وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ

WA HUWA YATAWALLA-Ṣ-ṢĀLIḤĪN

*and He befriends the righteous ones*  
{7:196p}

There is a difference between the two grades of ‘friendship’. One ‘befriends’ Allāh, and the other is befriended by Allāh. They are two stations: one lesser and one greater.

Your ‘befriending’ of Allāh stems from your struggle with your lower self.

Your befriending of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, stems from conforming to the Sunnah. Your support of the believers stems from your following of the rightful leaders. So understand the meaning of what Allāh has said,

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ

WA MAN YATAWALLA-LLAHA WA RASŪLAHŪ WA-L-LADḥĪNA ḂĀĀMANŪ  
FAḂINNA ḤIZBA-LLAHI HUMU-L-GḥĀLIBŪN

*Who ever makes Allāh his Friend and His Messenger and the believers,  
then they are the partisans of Allāh and they are the victors”*<sup>AA</sup>

{5:56}

## 6

There is only one trait that frustrates actions and many people fail to take heed of it. It is the discontentment and resentment {*sukḥuṭ*} of the slave concerning the Decrees of Allah most High. He said,

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ فَاحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ

DḥĀLIKA BIḂANNAHUM KARIHŪ MĀĀ ḂANZALA-LLAHU FAḂAḤBATĀ ḂAḂMĀLAHUM

*Because they are adverse to what Allāh has sent down  
He has made their works to be fruitless.*

(47:9)

## 7

If the dhikr becomes heavy upon your tongue and your speech full of mistakes {al-laghḥ}; if your limbs are swollen by desires and the door of contemplation {fikrah} is closed; then know that this is the result of your gross misdeeds {ʿawzarik} or the action of hypocrisy {an-nifāq} within your heart.

There is no way out of it other than through returning in repentance {at-tawbah}, reformation of the self {al-ʿiṣlāḥ}<sup>89</sup>, taking refuge {al-ʿiṭṣām bi-llāh} in Allāh, and absolute sincerity {al-ʾikhlāṣ} in the religion of Allāh Most High for as He has said,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ  
وَاخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأَلَيْكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

ʾILLĀ-L-LADĤĤĪNA TĀBŪ WAʾAṢLAḤŪ WA ʿTAṢAMŪ BI-LLĀHI  
WA ʾAKḤLAṢŪ DĪNAHUM LI-LLĀHI FĀʾULĀʾĪKA MAʿA-L-MUʾMINĪN

*Except those who turn repentant and reform and hold fast to Allāh  
and make their religion sincerely for Allāh. Those are amongst the believers.*

{4:146p}

He does not say “from” {min} the believers but “among” {maʿa} the believers and these words provide hope if you have understanding and are intact.<sup>90</sup>

ʾAbū-ī-Ḥasan said, by way of explaining the words of Allāh,

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ  
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ  
يَزِيغُ قُلُوبُ فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ

LAQADĀ-TĀBA-LLAHU ʿALA-N-NABIYYI WA-L-MUHĀJIRĪN WA-L-ʾANṢARI-  
-L-LADĤĤĪNA-T-TABAʿUHU FĪ SĀʿATI-L-ʿUSRATI MIM BAʿADI MA KĀDA-  
-YAZĪĠĤU QULŪBU FARĪQIM-MINHUM THŪMMA TĀBA ʿALAYHIM

*Allāh has turned in forgiveness to the Prophet and the Migrants and the Helpers  
who followed him in the hour of difficulty  
after the hearts of a party from them had zigzagged, then He turned to them*

{9:117p}

Allāh has mentioned *His* turning in Mercy and Forgiveness {tawbah}<sup>91</sup> to those without fault {lā yudḥnib} so that those who are at fault would not be frightened. First He mentioned the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace

<sup>89</sup> there are three words that are variously translated into English as ‘reformation’ but carry, in actuality, very different meanings. *al-ʿiṣlāḥ* is the reformation of one’s actions, *at-tajadid* is the renewal of one’s self, and *al-iḥyah* is the revivification of one’s self. All three have been translated in various texts {where the Arabic was neither given in Arabic characters nor was it given through transliterated Roman characters} as ‘reformation’ of the self.

<sup>90</sup> *Durrat al-ʾAsrār* p 50

<sup>91</sup> tāba {twb} to repent, be penitent, do penance; to turn from, be converted, renounce sin, forswear etc. When the exact same word is used in speaking of Allāh it means that He ‘turns’ ie: He restores His Grace or He forgives or is Merciful.

be upon him; then the Muhājarīn and then the ʾAnṣār who had done no wrong, and only *then* did He mention “a party from amongst them”. Had He mentioned only those whose hearts had zigzagged, which is to say — gone astray or deviated from the true and straight Way — or had He mentioned them first, He would have broken those very same hearts.

## 8

Shaykh ʾAbū-l-ʿAbbās, may Allāh be content with him, said, “I was with the Shaykh in our travels to al-ʾIskandariyyah when we were coming from the West <sup>92</sup>. I was seized by a state of such severe constraint and anguish {*dīqu shadīd*} that I could hardly bear it. I went to Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh be content with him, who took my measure and said,

“Aḥmad.” and I replied, “Yes my lord {*naʿam yā sīdī*}.”

He said, “Ādam was created by the Hand of Allāh Who made the Angels prostrate before him and then caused him to dwell in the Garden for half a day — five hundred years {*kḥamsāʾtu ʿām*} — then sent him down to the Earth. By Allāh! Ādam was not brought down to the Earth to be lessened but to be fulfilled! He, praised be He on High, decided to bring him down to the Earth before He created him as we know from His Words,

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

ʾINNĪ JĀʿILUN FĪ-L-ʾARḌI KḤALĪFAH

*Surely shall I place upon the Earth a representative*  
(2:30p)

“He did not say a representative in the Heavens or in the Garden!

“The descent of Ādam upon the Earth was honourable {*karāmah*} and not shameful or ignominious {*ihānah*}. When Ādam worshipped Allāh in the Garden he worshipped Him out of knowledge {*bi-t-taʿarīf*} and when he worshipped Him upon the Earth he did by His direct command {*bi-t-taklīf*}. When the second augmented {*tawaffarat*} the first he was worthy {*istshaqq*} of being kḥalifah.

“You too have a share of Ādam. Your beginning was in the Heavens of the Spirit {*samāʾi-r-rūḥ*} where you worshipped Him in the Garden of Knowledge {*janati-l-maʿarīf*}, and you descended to the Earth of the Self {*ʾarḍu-n-nafs*} to worship Him by His direct command {*bi-t-taklīf*}. When the two worships are augmented within you then *you* will deserve to be a kḥalifah.” <sup>93</sup>

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا

ʾALASTU BI-RABBIKUM: QĀLŪ BALĀ SHĤAHIDNA

*“Am I not your Lord ?” They said, “Yes! We testify.”*  
{ 7:172 }

Here, as in so many places, the understanding of the meaning is derived from the tension and twists taken in the Arabic language which is almost impossible to render into English as there are no cognates. There is possibly a basis for understanding in the use of the English word “turn” where most translators only use “repent” but it is the contextual and associative sense that simply does not come across from one language to the other.

<sup>92</sup> see p 14 Volume One: *Orisons* Introduction and pp 26-27 Volume Two, Book 1.

<sup>93</sup> *Laṭāʾif al-Minan* pp 53-54



## 9

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ

TATAJĀFĀ JUNŪBUHUM ʿANI-L-MADĀJĪ

*Their sides shun their beds*

(32:16p}

“Has He ordered their sides, or that is to say, their bodies to shun the beds of sleep where their hearts slumber and embrace other than Him?

“Nay, rather has He raised up their hearts and their inner secrets {ʿasrārihim}: embrace no thing!!!

“Grasp the meaning of “*their sides shun*’ and know that it means that they shun sleeping with and embracing the ‘other’ {*al-ʿaghyār*} and contesting the Decrees.

يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَ طَمَعًا

YADʿŪNA RABBAHUM KHĀWFAW WA ṬAMAʿĀ

*they call upon their Lord in fear and hope*

(32:16}

“Their fear of Him excluded the ‘other’ and out of love did they desire

وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

WA MIMMĀ RAZAQĀNAHUM YUNFIQŪN

*and they spend from that which We have provided them*

(32:16}

“Here my words could expand to fill an entire book. His Truth {*al-ḥaqq*} has conquered the heart with His Power, restored it to life {*inʿashahā*} with His Wisdom {*bi-ḥikmatahu*} and enriched it {*ʿaghnāhā*} by His intimate discourse {*bi-munājātahu*} with which He addresses His Creation.”

10

He said, “I saw that I was sitting with one of my companions before my master {ʾustādhi} and he said to me, ‘Learn four things from me. Three for you and one for for this poor man {al-miskīn}.

“Make no choice about anything on your own authority {ʾamrik}. Choose not to choose {wa-khtara ʾalā takhtār} and then flee from that choice and then flee from your flight and then flee from everything to Allāh,

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ  
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

WA RABBUKA YAKḤLUQU MĀ YASHĀʾU WA YAKḤTĀR :  
WA MĀ KĀNA LAHUMU-L-KḤIYARAH :  
SUBĤĤĀNA-LLĀHI WA TAʿĀLĀ ʿAMMĀ YUSHRIKUN

Your Lord makes what He Wills and Chooses. They never have any choice.  
Glorified be Allāh and exalted is He above all they associate with Him  
(28:68}

“All choices of the Law {ash-sharīʿah} are the choosing of Allāh; from you there is nothing and there is no escape. Listen and obey; this is the realm of Lordly comprehension {al-faqihahu-rabānī} and truly inspired knowledge {al-ʿilmu-l-ilhāmī}. It is the ground for the knowledge of reality {li-ʿilma-l-ḥaiqqah} which is received from Allāh for the one who is equal to receiving it. Understand and say,

وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيمٍ  
وَإِنْ جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

WA-Dā-ʿU ʾILĀ RABIK: ʾINNAKA LAʿALĀ HUDAM-MUSTAQĪM  
WA ʾIN JĀDALŪKA FAQULI-LLĀHU ʾAʿLAMU BIMĀ TAʿMALŪN

And call to your Lord. Truly you are on the straight guidance.  
And if they argue with you say; ‘Allāh knows best what you do’  
(22:67p-68}

“Asceticism {az-zuhd} is incumbent on you in the world and trust {at-tawakkul} in Allāh, for asceticism is a qualification for spiritual practice {al-ʾamāl} and trust is at the apex {rāʿs} of spiritual states {al-ʾaḥwāl}. Call Allāh as Witness and cling to Him in speech, and action, in behaviour {akhlāq} and in spiritual states.

وَمَنْ يَتَصَبَّمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

WA MAÑ YAʿTAŠIM-BI-LLĀHI FAQADĤ HUDIYA ʾILĀ ŠIRATĪM-MUSTAQĪM

He who clings to Allāh is guided onto a Straight Path  
(3:101p}

“Beware of doubt {*ash-shak*}, associating others with Allāh {*ash-shirk*}, greed {*at-tamāʿ*} and resisting {*al-ʿitirād*} Allāh in any matter. Worship Allāh in exalted intimacy {*ʿala-l-qurbi-l-ʿadḥīm*} and you will obtain to love {*al-maḥabah*}, being chosen {*al-iṣṭafāʿiyyah*}, made special {*al-takḥṣīs*} and friendship {*at-tawliyyah*} with Allāh.”

وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

WA-LLĀHU WALIYYU-L-MUTTAQĪN

*and Allāh is the Friend of those who guard themselves for Him.*  
(45:19p)

Then he said, ‘That which has cut off {*qataʿa*} the soul {*nafs*} of this poor man from arrival {*al-wuṣilah*} to the knowledge of Allāh, to obedience to Him, what has veiled his heart from true spiritual knowledge {*maʿarifah*} and distracted his intelligence {*ʿaql*} from the direct witnessing {*shawāhid*} of His Unity are two things: entering into the affairs of this world according to his own self direction {*tadbīrahu*} and uncertainty {*rayb*} over the bestowals of his Beloved. Thus Allāh has punished him with veiling, recurrent doubt, forgetfulness of what is due on the ‘account’ {*al-ḥisāb*} until he became submerged in the sea of self-direction and self-determination and suspended {*dalī*} in self questioning.

أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

ʾAFALĀ YATŪBŪNA ʾILĀ-LLĀHI WA YASTAGḤFIRŪNAH  
WA-LLĀHU GHAFŪRUR-R-RAḤĪM. ﴿٥٧﴾

*and will they not return to Allāh and ask forgiveness  
for Allāh is Forgiving, Mercy Bestowing. ﴿٥٧﴾*  
(5:74)

“So return to Allāh at the first sign of self direction and self determination and you will receive from Him the aid of ease {*at-taysīr*} and you will be kept from finding things difficult {*at-taʿassir*}. Scrupulous self examination {*waraʿ*} which does not bear fruit in knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} and light {*an-nūr*} should not be reckoned as rewarding {*ajrā*}, and any evil doing {*sīʾah*} which is followed by fear of Allāh {*al-khawf*} and flight {*harab*} to Allāh should not be accounted as a crime {*wazarā*}.”

Then he pointed and said, ‘Take your provision {*rizq*} from where Allāh has caused you to dwell by exercising knowledge and following of the sunnah. Do not seek to go higher until He raises you up lest you lose your footing {*qadimak*}.”

قُلْ إِنْ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ  
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

QUL ʾINNA RABBĪ YABĀSUTUR-RIZQA LIMAŶY-YASHĀʾU WA YAQĀDIR  
WA LAKINNA ʾAKṬHARA-N-NASI LĀ YAʿLAMUN. ﴿٣٦﴾

*Say; Truly my Lord enlarges the provision or narrows it as He Wills  
but most of the people do not know ﴿٣٦﴾*  
(34:36)

11

If an obstacle arises in your path to turn you away from Allāh.— stand firm {faṭḥbit} —

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا  
وَ اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

YĀĀḥAYYUHĀ-L-LADḥĪNĀ ḥĀĀMANŪŪ IDḥĀ LAQĪTUM FĪATAN FA-Tḥ-BUTŪ  
WA-Dḥ-KURŪ-LLĀHA KATHĪRAL-LAḥALLAKUM TUFLIḤŪN

*Oh you who do believe, if you encounter an army — stand firm  
and remember Allāh abundantly; that thus you may be successful  
{8:45}*

12

Surely one thinks poorly of Allah to imagine that one is aided by any one other than Allāh.

مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ  
فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ لِيَقْطَعْ  
فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدَهُ مَا يَغِيظُ

MAN KĀNA YADḥUNNU ḥAL LAY YANṢURAHU-LLAHU FĪ-D-DUNYĀ WA-L-ḥAKḥIRAH  
FAL-YAMDUD BI-SABABIN ḥILA-S-SAMĀĀ'I TḥUMMA-L-YAQṬAḥA  
FAL-YANDḥAR HAL YUDḥHIBANNA KAYDUHŪ MĀ YAGḥĪDḥ

*Who ever thinks that Allāh will not aid him in this world and the next  
let him stretch a rope to heaven and then hang himself  
and see if his snare suffices to dispell that which enraged him.  
{22:15}*

13

It is hypocrisy {nifāq} to pretend to conform to the pattern of the Sunnah when Allāh knows otherwise and it is polytheism {shirk} to take as friends or mediators {ash-shafāḥ} other than Allāh. Allāh on High says,

مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ ؕ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

MĀ LAKUM MIN DUNIHI MIN WALIYYIW WA LA ShĀFIḥ: ḥAFALĀ TATADḥAKKARŪN

*There is none to you other than He that is a friend or intercessor.  
Will you not then remember?  
{32:4p}*



## 14

A form of hidden lust {*ash-shahwatu-l-khafiiyyah*} for the walī is his desire to defeat or destroy the one who has oppressed him. Allāh says to the Inviolable One {*al-maṣūm*}, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ

FĀ-Ṣ-BIR KAMĀ ṢABARA ʾULŪ-L-ʿAZMI MIR-RUSUL

*Be you patient as were patient the resolute ones from the Messengers.*  
{46:35p}

Which is to say that for whatever reason, Allāh Most High might not wish their destruction.

## 15

The lower self {*an-nafsu-l-ammārah*} has four centres:

A centre of desire and disobedience	A centre enamoured of laziness
A centre which conforms to public opinion	A centre which fails to carry out duties

فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ  
وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ وَاقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ  
فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

FA-QĀTULŪ AL-MUSHRIKĪN ḤAYTHU WAJATTUMŪHUM WA KHUDHŪHUM

WA-Ḥ-ṢURŪHUM WA-QĀ-ʿUDŪLAHUM KULLA MARṢADĀ

FA-IN TĀBŪ WA ʾAQĀMU-Ṣ-ṢALĀTA

WA-ʾĀTŪ-Z-ZAKĀTA FA-KHALLŪ SABĪLAHUM

ʾINNA-LLAHA GHAFŪRUR-RAḤĪM

*Slay the idolaters wherever you find them, capture them and confine them,  
and lie for them everywhere in ambush  
But if they turn in repentance, perform the prayer, and pay the alms, let them go their way.  
Allāh is All Forgiving, All Mercy Full.*

{9:5p}

## 16

Had Nūḥ {Noah}, peace be upon him, known that among his descendants there would be those who believed in the Unicity {*yuhīd*} of Allāh he would not have cursed them but rather would have said,

« اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْفِرْ لِقَوْمِيْ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ »

“ALLĀHUMMA-Gḥ-FIR LI-QAWMI FAʾINNAHUM LA YAʿALAMŪN”

“Oh Allāh, forgive my people for they do not know.”

As Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “Each of them, peace be upon them, had knowledge and clarity from Allāh and Allāh knows best.”

## 17

The best shelter against rebelliousness {maʿaṣī} is *al-ʾistighfār* {seeking forgiveness of Allāh}.

وَمَا كَانَ اَللّٰهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَاَنْتَ فِيْهِمْ  
وَمَا كَانَ اَللّٰهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ

WA MĀ KĀNA-LLAHU LI-YUʿADḥDḥIBAHUM WA ʾANTA FĪHIM:  
WA MĀ KĀNA-LLAHU MUʿADḥDḥIBAHUM WA HUM YASTAGḥFIRŪN

*and Allāh would not punish them whilst you were amongst them  
and Allāh would not punish them whilst they sought forgiveness*

{8:33}

## 18

One night I read the Words of Allāh,

لَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَاءَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ  
اِنَّهُمْ لَن يُّغْنُوْا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا

LA TATTABIʿ ʾAHWĀĀʾA-L-LADḥĪNA LA YAʿLAMŪN  
INNAHUM LAY YUGḥNŪ ʿANIKA MINA-LLAHI ShĀYʾĀ

*Do not follow the caprices of those who have no knowledge  
Surely they will avail you naught from Allāh*

{45:18p;19p}

Then I slept and I saw the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, and he said,

« اَنَا مِنْ يَعْلَمُ، وَلَا اُغْنِيْ عَنْكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا »

“ANĀ MIMAY YAʿALAM, WA LĀ ʾUGḥNĪ ʿANKA MINA-LLAHI ShĀYʾA”

“I am from those *with* knowledge, and I can avail you naught from Allāh.”

## 19

I heard the saying of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, coming to me

« إِنَّهُ لَيَغَانُ عَلَى قَلْبِي  
فَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ فِي الْيَوْمِ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً »

“INNAHU LAYAGHĀNI ‘ALA QALBĪ  
FA-’ASTAGHFIRU-LLAHA FĪ-L-YAWMI SABA‘ĪNA MARAH”

“Any time a cloud comes over my heart  
I make ‘istighfiru-llah {ask forgiveness of Allāh} seventy times in that day”

I was perplexed as to the meaning of this ḥadīth and then I saw the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him and he said, “Oh blessed one, this is a veil of light not any other.

« يَا مُبَارَكٌ، ذَاكَ غَيْنَ الْأَنْوَارِ لَا غَيْنَ الْأَغْيَارِ »

“YA MUBARĀK, DHĀKA GHĀYNA-L-’ANWĀRI LA GHĀYNA-L-’AGHĪYĀR”

“Oh blessed one, these are veils of light not clouds of vicissitudes”

## 20

“Know” Allāh supports you with the light of vision {*bi-nuru-l-baṣīrah*} and by clarity of consciousness {*ṣafā’u-l-sarīrah*}. The Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, was once asked,

قَالَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا رُؤُوا ذَكَرُ اللَّهَ  
« مَنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ يَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ؟ »

“MAN ‘AWLIĀ’A-LLĀHA YĀ RASŪLU-LLAH?”  
QĀLA-L-DHĪNA ‘IDHĀ RU’UWŪ DHĀKARA-LLĀH”

“Who are the friends of Allāh, oh Messenger of Allāh?”  
He said, “Those who when they are given ‘sight’, remember Allah.”

You should understand the meaning of ‘when they are given ‘sight’. Leave the sight of bodies {*al-’ajsām*} and go to the vision {*rū’yah*} of meanings {*al-mā’ana*} and knowings {*al-’afhām*}. The common ‘seeing’ {*al-baṣīratu-l-’āmiyyah*} is sight which is shared with the animals and is not accompanied by ‘insight’ {*baṣīrah*}. Follow instead the light of Allāh which is preserved in the heart which is the ‘light’ by which the ‘awliyā’ see {*naḍḥaru*}, contemplate {*’a’tibar*}, comprehend in stillness {*wuqūf*}<sup>94</sup> and verify by being {*taḥaqquq*}. Do not be like those of whom Allāh has said,

<sup>94</sup> wqf = to come to a standstill, come to a stop; to stand still; to position one self, take one’s stand; the inner meanings of this term are akin in Šūfī parlance to cessation of being, meditation, contemplation and the comprehension in stillness or suspension which arises out of these actions or practices when they are successfully carried out.

و تَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَ هُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ

WA TARĀHUM YANDḥURŪNA ʾILAYKA WA HUM LĀ YUBĀṢĪRŪN

*and you see them looking at you but they do not perceive*

{7:198p}

This was clearly manifest in he who was the best of the creation and who possessed the greatest insight, blessings and peace be upon him. Everything was scented by his being, his light and his fragrance {*bi-tayyibahu*}<sup>95</sup>. Some find it strange that he liked scented oils {*tīyb*} when all the scholars agree that his fragrance {*tayyibahu*} was more fragrant {*atīyb*} than any perfume {*tīyb*}. If you understand this then enter into the fields of knowing him, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

وَ اللَّهُ مَا أَكَلَ إِلَّا لَنَا، وَ لَا شَرَبَ إِلَّا لَنَا،  
وَ لَا نَكَحَ إِلَّا لَنَا، كَذَلِكَ لَا يُطِيبُ إِلَّا لَنَا،  
فَهُوَ إِذَا أَصْلَ كُلِّ طِيبٍ،  
وَ بَهَاءُ كُلِّ مَعْدِنٍ وَ هُوَ مَعْدِنُ الْمَعَادِنِ،  
فَاقْتَبَسَ مِنْ نُورِهِ،  
وَ اغْتَرَفَ مِنْ بَحْرِهِ،  
وَ أَشْرَبَ مِنْ مَعْرِفَتِهِ،  
وَ تَزَيَّنَ بِطَاعَتِهِ تَكُنِ الْأَشْيَاءُ طَوْعَ يَدَيْكَ

WA-LLĀHI MA ʾAKLA ʾILLA LANĀ, WA LĀ ShARIBA ʾILLA LANĀ,  
WA LĀ NAKAḤA ʾILLA LANĀ, KADḥALIKA LĀ YUṬIYIBU ʾILLA LANĀ  
FA-HUWA ʾIDḥAN ʾAṢLU KULLI TĪBAN

WA BAHĀʾU KULLI MAʿDININ WA HUWA MAʿDINU-L-MAʿĀDINI  
FA-QĀ-TABIS MIN NŪRIHI

WA-Gḥ-TARIF MIM BAḤRIHI

WA-Sh-RABĀ MIN MAʿARIFTIHI

WA TAZAYYAM BI-ṬĀʿATIHI TAKUNU-L-ʾASHĥYĀʾU ṬAWAʿ YADAYK.

By Allāh! He did not eat other than for us and he did not drink except for us  
and he did not marry but for us and like that he did not perfume himself except for us.

Truly he was the source of all goodness and sweet fragrance.

He was the origin of all beauty and he was the origin of origins.

Light your lamp from his light.

Irrigate your fields from his river. Drink from his spiritual knowledge

Beautify yourself with his obedience and everything will be between your hands.

<sup>95</sup> *tāba* = to be good, pleasant, agreeable; to be or become delightful or delicious; to become ripe; to regain one's health, recuperate, convalesce; to make pleasant, agreeable, delicious or sweet; to scent, perfume; to spice, to season; to improve; to heal; to cure; *tīb* = goodness; scent, perfume. *tayyib* = pleasant, friendly; kindly. *tūbā* = blessedness, beatitude.



## 21

I heard the reported saying of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,

”مَنْ سَكِنَ خَوْفَ الْفَقْرِ قَلْبَهُ قَلَّ مَا يُرْفَعُ عَمَلُهُ“

“MAN SAKINA KHAWFA-L-FAQRI QALBAHU QALLA MĀ YURFA‘U ‘AMAL”

“He, who in his heart has come to dwell the fear of poverty, rarely has his deeds raised up.”

I remained for a year thinking about this and saying to myself, ‘Who is safe from this?’ until I saw the Messenger of Allāh, blessing and peace be upon him, in my sleep and he said to me,

”يَا مُبَارَكٌ، أَهْلَكْتَ نَفْسِكَ فَرَقٌ بَيْنَ خَطَرٍ وَ سَكْنٍ“

YĀ MUBARĀK, ‘AHLAKTU NAFSIKA FARQUN BAYNA KHATIRI-WA SAKAN

“Oh Blessed One, do you torture yourself by being trapped between ‘passing’ and ‘dwelling’?”<sup>96</sup>

## 22

The ‘knower’ {*al-‘arif*} is one who knows by the hardship of time {*shadā'idu-z-zamān*} the constantly flowing subtle benevolence {*al-aṭāfu-l-jāriyah*} of Allāh. The knower is one who knows his own evils and iniquities {*isā'at*} by dint of the multifold and manifest goodness {*ihsān*} of Allāh upon him.

فَاذْكُرُواْ ءَالَآءَ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ

FADĤKURŪ ‘ĀLĀ‘A-L-LAHI LA‘ALLAKUM TUFLIḤŪN

*So remember what Allāh has laid upon you that you may be successful.*

{7:69p}

## 23

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا  
وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

WA MAÑ YATTAQI-LLAHU YAJ‘AL-L-LAHŪ MAKĤRAJĀ ☪

WA YARZUQHU MIN ḤAYTHŪ LĀ YAḤTASIB.

*and who ever is yattaqi <sup>97</sup>Allāh, He will make a way out for him. ☪  
and He will provide for him from whence he never reckoned.*

{65:2p-3p}

<sup>96</sup> khṭr = temporary, passing, transient. √skn = still, calm, tranquil, repose, rest; also meaning: dwelling, staying, residing, = that which is permanent, lasting. The implication here is that passing fear and permanent anxiety reveal a sure lack of faith {‘imān}.

<sup>97</sup> wqy {waqy wiqāya} = to guard, to preserve, take good care of; to safeguard, to shield, shelter, preserve, protect; to protect, offer or afford protection; to prevent, obviate V & VIII to beware, to be wary, make sure; to spare or deal mercifully out of fear of Allāh, show regard for the sake of Allāh, to make something a matter of conscience.

Sahl ibn ʿabdu-LLāh at-Tustarī, Allāh sanctify his secret, explained *at-taqwā* as voiding oneself of power {*al-ḥawl*} and strength {*al-quwwah*}. He disavowed the pretension of outward *taqwā*<sup>98</sup> by the slave whose internal being {*nafs*} is impure. This is especially true in a slave who has a lot of rebelliousness {*dḥāhiru-l-māʿāṣī*} and desires {*ash-shahwāt*} and forces {*yahmīl*} himself to acts of obedience and winds up blocking himself by his own supplications. What he has done in actuality is to add to *his* own ‘power’ and *his* own ‘strength’. This slave has exceeded the limits {*al-ḥudūd*} and he fabricates great lies {*al-farriyyah*} and things unheard of {*al-ʿajīb*}. Due to his evil {*sharrah*} his goodness {*kḥayr*} does not manifest.

Those who seek the truth {*al-muḥaqqiqūn*} link or correlate {*yansibūn*} all things to Allah and thus look to the means and the ends {*ath-thimar*}.

If the fruits {ends} of their deeds are lost, they know that it was *their* knowledge and deeds that were deficient and contained within them something which was not correct {*madkḥulān*}.

If the original motivations {*al-bawāʿith*} and root principles {*al-ʿuṣūl*} are not correct in the beginning, there will be no sound fruit at the end.

If you only pretend to *at-taqwah*, what opening can there be for you?

If you find the opening, then you have the fruit of your *taqwah* as Allāh has promised, and you are on the correct and good path {*fāʾanta ʿala aṣ-ṣawāb wa-l-kḥayr*}. If, on the contrary, you only find puzzles and bewilderment {*ḥayrah*} then you must ask who is the Truthful and who is the liar?

وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا  
وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

WA MAN ʾAṢDAQU MINA-LLAHI QILA

WA MAN YATAWAKKAL ʿALA-LLAHI FAHUWA ḤASBUH

Who is more truthful in His Speech than Allah?

and he who relies upon Allāh, then He is his support.

{4:122p & 65:3p}

Neither is their true reliance {*tawakkul*} without *taqwah* nor are there fruits without *tawakkul*.

Therefore look closely and deeply into the purity of your motives, the veracity of your principles and then — observe the fruits.

and Allah loves the steadfast patient ones

{*aṣ-ṣābarīn*}

<sup>98</sup> in this case *at-taqwā* = outward piety, godliness, devoutness

## 24

Allāh says on the tongue of His Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, in an Ḥadīth Qudsī,<sup>99</sup>

”مَنْ شَغَلَهُ ذِكْرِي عَنْ مَسْأَلَتِي  
أَعْطَيْتُهُ أَفْضَلَ مَا أُعْطِيَ السَّائِلِينَ“

“MAN SHĀGALAHU DHĪKRĪ ‘AN MASĀ‘LATI  
‘A‘ṬAYTAHU ‘AFḌALA MĀ ‘UṬĪ-S-SĀ‘ILĪN”

“He who is occupied in remembering Me rather than in asking Me  
— to him will I give the best of what I give to those who ask.”

If Allāh has preferred for us to be occupied with His remembrance {*dhikru-llāh*} over asking or begging {*masā‘alatahu*} of Him how can it not be that He prefers remembrance and lauds {*ath-thaṇā‘*} of Him rather than preoccupation with our selves?

When he ‘knows’ Allāh — then Allāh will shut the door for him of his own self-centredness {*al-‘intaṣāru-li-nafsih*}. The ‘knower’ {*al-‘ārīf*} in accord with his knowledge {*ma‘rifatuhu*} does not perceive actions {*afa‘āl*} emanating from any one other than Allāh so how can the knower imagine triumphing over any one when he sees all the actions of the creation is Allāh acting through them? How can Allāh deny to His Friends His Support when they have totally surrendered their self(s) to Him and His Decrees?

They dwell in the palaces of His Sublimity and are shielded by His Glory. He shelters them from any thing other than His Remembrance; shut off from every thing but loving Him; and carried faraway from every thing but His Intimacy. Their tongues vibrate with His Praise and their hearts are illuminated by His Lights. He has made a home for them between His Hands. Their hearts are surrendered in His Presence and their secret is realized in directly beholding His Oneness.

## 25

I saw my self with the Angels Who Are Near {*al-muqarabīn*} which is bliss {*naima*} to which nothing compares. They said to me, “Go on to greater bliss!” and I went on with them and entered a place of such munificence and generosity that I cannot hope to describe it for what I beheld was indescribable. I was filled with a great longing to ‘witness’ and suddenly I was ‘seeing’ and I was told,

فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ

FAMAN ZUḤZIḤA ‘ANI-NĀRI WA ‘UDKḤILA-L-JANNATA FAQAD FAZ

Whoever is torn from the Fire and made to enter the Garden, he is triumphant  
{3:185p}

<sup>99</sup> In the Ḥadīth Qudsī {*al-aḥādithu-l-qudsiyyah*} Allāh speaks to us on the tongue of His Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. The Ḥadīth Qudsīyyah rank just after the Qur’ān in importance. The sayings {*al-ḥadīth*} of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, uttered on his own authority are graded in accord with the reliability of their transmission, and have many divisions and sub-divisions, and touch upon every aspect of life; inner and outer and are a constant guide for the believing men and women.

”مَنْ كَفَفْتُ جَوَارِحَهُ عَنْ مَعْصِيَتِي، وَ زَيْنَتُهُ بِحِفْظِ أَمَانَتِي،  
وَفَتَحْتُ قَلْبَهُ لِمُشَاهَدَتِي، وَأَطْلَقْتُ لِسَانَ سِرِّهِ لِمُنَاجَاتِي،  
وَرَفَعْتُ الْحِجَابَ بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ صِفَاتِي،  
وَأَشْهَدْتُهُ مَعَانِي أَرْوَاحِ كَلِمَاتِي،  
فَقَدْ زَحَزَحْتُهُ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأَدْخَلْتُهُ جَنَّتِي،  
وَفَازَ بِقُرْبِي وَ صَحْبَتِهِ مَلَائِكَتِي“

MAN KAFAFTU JAWĀRIḤAHU ʿAN MAʿAṢIYATĪ,  
WA ZAYYANTUHU BI-ḤIFḌḥU ʾAMANATĪ  
WA FATAḤTU QALBAHU LI-MUShĀHADATĪ,  
WA ʾAṬLAQĀTU LISĀNI SIRIHI LI-MUNĀJĀTĪ,  
WA RAFAʿTU-L-ḤIJĀBA BAYNAHU WA BAYNA ṢIFĀTĪ,  
WA ʾASHḤATTAHU MAʿĀNI ʾARWĀḤI KALIMĀTĪ,  
FAQADĀ ZAḤZAḤTAHU ʿANI-N-NĀRI WA-DĀKḥALTUHU JANATĪ.  
WA FĀZA BI-QURBI WA SAḤIBATHU MALĀĀʾIKATĪ.”

Whose limbs I have protected from disobedience and beautified by the preservation of My Trust  
whose heart have I opened that he may witness Me  
and whose tongue I have freed that he might discourse with Me,  
he for whom I have lifted the veils between him and My Attributes  
that he might know the spiritual meaning of My Words.  
I have torn him from the Fire and caused him to enter My Garden.  
He has won through to My nearness and My Angels are his companions.

And that is the Garden which is imminent {*muʿmajalah*}<sup>100</sup> for the Family of Ascertained Believers and they shall enter it on the Day of Reparation {*yawm al-jazaʾa*} when they shall enter it with their taste {*dḥawaq*}, with their senses {*ḥiss*} and with their eyes {*ʿayāna*}. Then shall I gather them together by exposition {*bi-l-ibārah*} and by intimations {*ishḥarah*} and the subtle essence of mercy {*al-luṭf*} and spiritual knowing {*al-ḥaqīqah*} and by the saying of Allāh, Most High:

يَبْنَىٰ ءَادَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ

YĀ BANĪ ʾĀĀDAMA LĀ YAQTINANNAKUMU-Sh-ShAYṬĀNU  
KAMĀĀ ʾAKḥRAJA ʾABAWAYKUM-MINA-L-JANNAH

*Oh children of Ādam, do not be enraptured by Shayṭān  
as were your parents in departing from the Garden  
{7:27p}*

<sup>100</sup> see our brief introduction to the subject of the three ‘times’; *zamān al-kathīf* = gross or historical time, *zamān al-laṭīf* = subtle or trans-historical time and *zamān al-alṭaf* = super subtle time or heiro-historical time in Volume One, *Orisons* for a better understanding of what the Shāykh means by a Garden which is ‘imminent’ for those who believe with certainty based on direct witnessing {*mushāhadah*}. There are those who await the Day of Judgement and those for whom the Day of Judgment has come, just as those who await resurrection and those who are resurrected.



## 26

The perfected ones {*al-kāmilūn*} bear the attributes of the Truth {*ḥamilūn li-ʿawṣāfi-l-ḥaqq*} and bear also the attributes of the creation {*al-kḥalq*}. If you look upon them as creatures then you will see them as humans and if you look upon them as the Truth then you shall see their reality {*al-ḥaqiqah*} beautified by the Truth {*al-ḥaqq*}.

Their outer appearance is poverty {*al-faqr*} and their internal reality is abundant wealth {*al-ghina*}. They are formed by the character {*takhluqan bi-ʿakḥlaq*} of the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, to whom Allāh said,

وَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنِي

WA WAJADAKA ʿAĀʾILAN FAʾAGḤNĀ

*and He found you impoverished and enriched {you}*  
{93:8}

Did He, the Almighty, enrich him, blessings and peace be upon him, with money? Hardly, for it was he who tied a rock round his stomach to ward off hunger, and it was he who fed the entire army from a single plate, and it was he, eternal blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, who left Makkah on foot with nothing to eat except for a morsel hidden under the arm of Bilāl <sup>101</sup>, may Allāh be content with him.

## 27

The knowledge of the People of Sciences {*al-ʿulūm*} even though it is highly praised is darkness in comparison to the knowledge of the People of Realization {*at-taḥqīq*} who are those who have drowned in the currents of the Ocean of the Essence {*baḥru-dḥ-dḥār*}, within its hidden and ambiguous attributes {*ghumūdu-ṣ-ṣifāt*} where they exist without anxiety or concern {*ḥamm*}. They are the exalted elite {*al-kḥāṣatu-l-ʿaliā*} who have a share with the Prophets and the Messengers, peace and blessings be upon all of them, in their state {*ʾaḥwālahum*}. For them is a portion of the measure of their transmitted inheritance in accord with the saying of the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him,

« الْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ ، عَلَيْهِمُ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ »

“AL-ʿULAMĀʾU WARATHATU-L-ʿAMBĪYĀʾ — ALAYHIM AṢ-ṢALĀTU WA-S-SALĀM”

“The learned are the inheritors of the prophets, upon them benedictions and peace”

He also said, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,

“The learned masters of this community are like the prophets of the Children of Israel.”

<sup>101</sup> Bilāl, may Allāh be content with him, was the freed Ḥabashī slave who was greatly beloved by the Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, and was the first *muʾadḥḍin* {caller to prayer} of the Muslims and one of the ten promised the Garden.

In each case they abide in their station in accord with their Way of Knowledge and Wisdom {*sabīlu-l-ʿilmi wa-l-ḥikmah*} but not in their Realization of the Prophetic Station and State for that Prophetic Station is reserved for Prophets alone, benedictions of Allāh and peace be upon them, and is not attainable by others.

## 28

Any heir {*wārith*} is only an heir within the 'house' {*al-manzilah*} he has inherited, which is the bequest of he who is the ancestor of the heir; the legator {*al-muwarriṭh*}.

Allāh says,

وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيِّينَ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ

WA LAQADā FADḌALNA BAʿḌA-N-NABĪYYIN ʿALĀ BAʿḌā ..

*and we have favoured some of the Prophets above others*  
{17:55p}

As He favoured some of them over others so too has He favoured some heirs over others. The Prophets, blessings and peace be upon them, are the Eyes of Truth {*ʿāyynu-l-ḥaqq*}<sup>102</sup> and each eye sees according to its strength and each walī has his own particular speciality {*mādatum-makhṣuṣah*}.

## 29

Do not choose anything, but choose not to choose, and then abandon all choice to Allāh

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ

WA RABBUKA YAKḤLUQU MĀ YASHĀĀʿU WA YAKḤTAR  
MĀ KĀNA LAHUM AL-KḤIYARAH

*Your Lord makes what He wants and what He chooses.*  
*With them there is no choice.*  
{28:68p}

You should know that in matters of the Law {*ash-sharīʿah*}, all choices and arrangements are by Allāh. In that you have no choice save but to hear and obey.

They are the subject to the Understanding of the Lord {*al-fiqhu-r-rabbānī*} and Divine Knowledge {*al-ʿilmu-l-ʿilāhī*} and are the basis {*al-ʿard*} for the Science of Spiritual Truth {*ʿilmu-l-ḥaqīqah*} given by Allāh, the Most High, to the steadfast.

Understand this!!!

<sup>102</sup> ʿayn {pl. 'uyun, 'ā'yun} eye; spring, source, fountainhead {of water}; scout, reconnoitre; flower, choice, prime

## 30

The Sḡaykh, may Allāh be content with him said, “Once I was about to ask Allāh to punish someone for his injustice, but I had mixed feelings. I saw my Shāykh, and he said to me, ‘Haste for the destruction of enemies and victory over them is a sign of hidden lust for the walī <sup>103</sup>. Who is more unjust than the one who wishes to usurp the Will of Allāh and in so wishing follows his own desire? Allāh has ordered the Spotless One, blessings and peace be upon him, saying:

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ  
FĀ-Ṣ-BIR KAMĀ ṢABARA ʾULŪ-L-ʿAZMI MIR-RASUL WA LĀ TASTAʿJI-L-LAHUM

*Be you patient as were patient the resolute ones from the Messengers  
and don't seek to hasten the doom upon them*  
{46:35p}

and He said

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

FĀ-Ṣ-BIR; ʾINNA-L-ʿĀQIBATA LI-L-MUTTAQĪN

*Be patient. The ultimate outcome is with the muttaqīn <sup>104</sup>*  
{11:49p}

Certain and secure belief {*al-ʾīmān*} is the effacement and obliteration {*maḥī*} of attributes in Attributes, of names in Names, of essences in Essences: to the realization of the First {*al-ʾawwāl*} and the Last {*al-ākhir*} and the Revealed {*adh-dhāhir*} and the Concealed {*al-bāṭin*}. For what is with Him at the End was with Him in the Beginning and nothing exists independently Outside of Him that is not eternally Internal within Him. What is fixed and established {*thābit*} for anyone by Him is by His fixing and establishment and no other, and what is erased {*maḥī*} from anyone is done by His will and His choice. He says,

لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ  
يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ۖ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

LIKULLI ʾAJALIN KITĀB  
YAMḤŪ ALLĀHU MĀ YASHĀʾU WA YUTHĒBIT: WA ʾINDAHŪ ʾUMMU-L-KITĀB

*Everything has its book*  
*Allāh obliterates and establishes as He wills — and with Him is the Mother of the Book*  
{13:38p & 39}

This is the Original Knowledge {*al-ʾulumu-l-ʾawwal*} and the Essence of the Book {*ummu-l-kitāb*} and from this emanates all knowledge and all books.

<sup>103</sup> See 14 p 87 Volume II Book 1

<sup>104</sup> See footnote No. 93 for remarks on waqy {*waqy wiqāya*}

## 31

Throw yourself at the Door of Contentment {*bābu-r-riḍā*}; rid yourself of your personal glory and will until you no longer think of your returning {*tawbah*} to Him in repentance but of His turning to you in forgiveness. Remember His saying,

ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا

ThUMMA TĀBA ʿALAYHIM LI-YATŪBŪ

*Then He turned to them that they might turn {to Him}.*

{9:118p}

## 32

One night I read Sūratu-l-ʾIkhlās {112} followed by the Two Protectors <sup>105</sup>. I came to where Allāh says,

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ • الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ •

MIN SHARRI-L-WASWĀSI-L-KhANNĀS • ALLADhI YUWASWISU FĪ ṢUDŪRI-N-NĀS •

*from the evil of the slinking whisperer • who whispers in the hearts of people •*

{114: 4 & 5}

when I heard the following, “The worst evil is the whispering {*al-waswāsah*} that comes between you and your Beloved. It causes you to forget your good deeds and magnify your wrong deeds {*dḥati-sh-shamāl*} and depreciate your correct deeds {*dḥati-l-yamīn*} with a view to swaying you from good thoughts {*ḥusni-l-dḥan*} about Allāh and His Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, to bad thoughts {*sūʾi-dḥan*} about them — and neither should you pay any mind to those who are envious of you, for He said to His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him,

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ • وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ •

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ • وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ •

QUL ʾAʿUDhU BI-RABBI-L-FALAQA •

MIN ShARRI MĀ KhĀLAQA • WA MIN ShARRI GhĀSIQIN ʾIDhĀ WAQABĀ

WA MIN ShARRI-N-NAFFĀThĀTI FĪ-L-ʾUQADĀ •

WA MIN ShARRI ḤĀSIDIN ʾIDhĀ ḤASADĀ

*Say! I take refuge in the Lord of the Crack of Dawn*

*from the evil that exists within His Creation*

*and from the evil of the darkness of night when it gathers*

*and from the evil of those who blow on knots and the evil of enviers when they envy*

{ 113:1-5 }

<sup>105</sup> Sūratu-l-Falaq {113} and Sūratu-n-Nās {114}



Ask Me not that I cut him off from you. That would like me saying to him {the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him}

“Ask Me to protect you from the evil of those who are envious of you, but do not ask Me to cut them off from you, for the envious enjoy Divine Favours and Divine Favour {ni‘mah} must rest upon you.”

Be patient if you desire healing and it may be that it will come about through insight {kashf} or a communication {khiṭāb} but do not long for it whilst you are yet veiled {hijāb}.

## 33

The Shaykh said, may Allāh be content with him,

“If you wish to see with the vision of faith and everlasting certainty then be thankful to Allāh and content with what He has decreed and remember His Saying,

وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْتَرُونَ

WA MĀ BIKUM-M-MIN-N-NI‘MATIN FA-MIN ALLAH;  
THUMMA ʾIDHĀ MASSAKUMU-D-DURRU FA-ʾILAYHI TAJĀʾARŪN ❀

*Whatever blessings you have come from Allāh  
and when affliction visits you it is to Him that you run. ❀*  
{16:53}

“He said, ‘The beneficence {karāmah} of Allāh in the matter of your contentment is being diverted from misfortune by your awareness of the Day of the Meeting.

“The understanding man is one who has understanding about the signs of Allāh and whose occupation is remembrance of, and reflections on, His Favours. To him is open the Way {as-sabīl} through taking refuge in and affirming one’s poverty {faqr} in Him; by supplication and asking of Him and seeking protection with Him. So Allāh responds for there is no one who knows what it is that Allāh wishes to bestow.” Then he recited,

لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ❀  
يَمْحُوهُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ ۖ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ ❀

LIKULLI ʾAJALIN KITĀB ❀  
YAMḤŪ ALLAHU MĀ YASHĀʾU WA YUTHĒBIT; WA ʾINDAHŪ ʾUMMU-L-KITĀB ❀

*Everything has its book ❀*  
*Allāh obliterates and establishes as He wills — and with Him is the Mother of the Book ١٠٦ ❀*  
{13:38p & 39}

and said, “One night I read in my wīrd the saying of Allāh,

<sup>106</sup> *Ummu-l-Kitāb* = The Mother of the Book = the source of all revelation. See also page 97 for another perspective on or facet of this same āyah.

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ۖ وَ يَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ۖ

KULLUM-MAN ʿALAYHA FĀN ۖ

WA YABĀQĀ WAJHU RABBIKAH DhŪ-L-JALĀLI WA-L-ʾIKRĀM ۖ

*Every one upon it shall vanish ۖ*

*and yet there remains the Face<sup>107</sup> of your Lord, Exalted and Splendorous ۖ*

{55:26;27}

Then I saw Abū Bakr the Truthful, may Allāh be content with him, in a dream and he said to me,

“Unite yourself to the knowledge of He Who remains {baqī} and forsake that which passes away {fanā}. You will be exalted {jalāl} and honoured {kirām}. You will be exalted above passing away and you will be honoured by remaining.”

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

ʾINNA LI-LLĀHI WA ʾINNĀĀ ʾILAYHI RĀJIʿŪN ۖ

We belong to Allāh and to Him we return.

{2:156}



Oh Allāh,

I beseech You by the exalted station of our liege-lord Muḥammad  
and of

*“Ibrahim who was true to his trust.”*

{53:37}

and for the sake of every Nabī and Rusūl and every Siddiq and Ṣālih and Taqī

and by the Sacredness of the Supreme Name

{wa bi-hurmati ʿaḍhimi al-ʾismāʾi}

and all of the Names.

Obliterate from our hearts the creation

and make it to be in our innermost secret selves

as though it were dust in the wind.

And I beseech You to make us walk

the Path of your Prophets

and your Pure and God Fearing Friends

— Secretly and Openly —

*“For truly You have Power over all things.”*

{66:8}

<sup>107</sup> Wajh = Face = Presence. from wjh = a man of distinction, belonging to the nobility; II to raise to eminence, distinguish, honour. Face, countenance; front, face; outside; surface; prominent personality; appearance, guise, semblance; intention, design, purpose, aim, goal, objective, end; course, policy, guiding principle, precept; way, manner, method; reason, cause, meaning, signification; beginning, start, outset



*Shaykh Nooruddeen drawing water from the well at Humaythira 1986*

## THE ṢŪFĪ WAY

The word ʾIslām is analogous to the ‘*Dīn*’<sup>108</sup> of Allāh; a *Dīn* which is not limited by time or place and which includes within its meaning Divinely revealed ethics and morals {*al-akhlāqīyatū as-sāmiyah*} which govern all aspects of personal and communal behaviour. Also contained in its meaning is the realization of the necessity for the absolute and total surrender of the entire constituent being {*wajh*}<sup>109</sup> to Allāh. Beyond the realm of ethics and morals, as well as behaviour, its meanings extend to the nethermost boundaries and the deepest and highest levels that can be imagined and cherished by the studious traveller to Allāh.

The Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, when asked about its meaning, said,

« أَنْ يَسْلَمَ لِلَّهِ قَلْبُكَ، وَأَنْ يَسْلَمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِكَ وَ يَدِكَ »

ʾAN YASLAMA LI-LLĀHI QALBUK,  
WA ʾAN YASLAMA-L-MUSLIMŪNA MIN LISĀNIKA WA YADAK

It is to surrender to Allāh in your heart,  
{and to keep} safe from your tongue and your hands those who have surrendered {*al-muslimūn*}.

The surrender of the heart, the complete surrender according to personal capacity, which differs from person to person in accord with their nature {*tabāʾirahum*}, is the personal objective and goal {*hadafah*} of the ṣūfī.

The surrender of the heart to Allāh was the objective of ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan; his personal objective and the goal he set for others. When he arrived {*wuṣal*}, as a result of self struggle {*al-mujāhadātu*}, to the voluntary surrender of his whole heart to Allāh, he then sought to help others to reach the same goal, and he went on to announce the good news {*bushrah*} with everything that could lead to that end.

The atmosphere in which ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan lived was one of worshipful slavery {*ʿabūdīh*}. Can this slavery be anything else other than the surrender {*al-ʾislām*} to Allāh — and total reliance {*tawakkul*} on Allāh? Can this reliance be other than the complete surrender of the whole self {*wajh*} to Allāh — and pure sincerity {*ikhlāṣ*} — and what can the surrender of the being {*wajh*} be worth unless it is built on full and pure sincerity and yields the same sincerity of being — and complete love {*maḥabbah*} of Allah *subḥanahu wa taʿala* — and how could one surrender one’s self unless it be out of the love of that which is beyond and above every thing and every one?

An unconditional and wholly volitional surrender of the self to Allāh preceded by and accompanied with remembrance {*adh-dhikr*} and worship {*al-ʿibādah*} — this is what is called for.

To this end ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan guided people by means of example {*bi-mithāl*} and behaviour {*al-qudwah*}, by speech {*bi-l-hadīth*} and by explanation {*bi-ṣḥ-ṣharḥ*}.

<sup>108</sup> *dīn* from *dyn* = to be a debtor, to be indebted; owe > an obligation; claim; debt. And from *dāna* = to profess a belief, a religion, a conviction, a creed. We will continue to use the word “*dīn*” in our translation, for there is no exact English counterpart to precisely convey the meanings of the original Arabic. The essential sense of the meaning is an internal realization of an outstanding “debt”, the payment of which is one’s very life itself.

<sup>109</sup> See footnote 107 on page 99



He made clear to them that if they were able to complete this surrender of their self{s} to Allāh they would find themselves under His Protection {*kafālatahu*} and His Guardianship {*ri'āyatuhu*} and would thus enter into security {*ʿamn*} and peace {*salām*}.

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ  
لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

ʾALĀĀ ʾINNA ʾOWLĪYĀĀʾA-LLĀHI LĀ KḤṶWFUN ʿALAYHIM  
WA LĀ HUM YAḤZANŪN

ALLADĥĪNA ʾĀMANŪ WA KĀNŪ YATTAQŪN

LAHUMU-L-BUSHĥRĀ FI-L-ḤAYĀTI-D-DUNYĀ WA FI-L-ʾAKĥIRAH:  
LĀ TABĀDĪLA LI-KALIMĀTI-LLĀH; DĥALIKA HUWA-L-FṶWZU-L-ʿADĥĪM

*Surely the Friends of Allāh there is neither fear nor grief.*

*Those who believe and who have taqwah*

*For them are good tidings in the life of the present world and in the final one.*

*There is no changing the Words of Allāh. That is the supreme triumph.*

{10:62-64}

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan sought to proceed with people according to their readiness to ascend {*li-l-ʿurūj*}. He described the people who had reached the summit as the true élite of this world — the Chosen People of Allāh {*ahlu-llāhi wa kḥaṣṣatuhu*} — and described them in the following wonderful words,

“As for the Chosen People of Allāh — they are those whom He has removed from evil and all its roots {*ʾasūl*} — He has covered them with good in all its branches {*furuʿa*}. He has made solitude {*al-kḥalawāt*} beloved by them and opened to them the way of intimate discourse and the secrets of lovers {*al-munājāh*}. He knows them and they know Him. He loves them, and they love Him. They are by Him, and for Him, and He does not leave them to any others. He is not veiled to them but He has veiled them from others. They know nought other than Him and they have nought other than Him. These are they whom Allāh has guided and they who have the heart of wisdom {*ʾulū-l-ʾābāb*}.”

Not everyone attains to this, and Shāykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan did not imagine that he could bring everyone to this station. Even though the nature of things refuses equality in inclination among seekers, yet it does not refuse the provision of an atmosphere of radiant light, worship and sincerity out of which each is kindled according to his or her capacity.

Before we proceed to outline the steps of the path, it would be useful to speak about ṣūfism from the perspective of ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan. He said, “*at-taṣawwūf* is the training {*tadrīb*} of the self for Worship {*al-ʿubudiyyah*} and returning it {*radduhā*} to the Divine Orders {*al-ʾāḥkāmu-r-rubūbiyyah*}.”

This definition is similar to that of al-Kḥuldī {d. 348 Hijra}, who said, “It is placing the self {*an-nafs*} in servitude, escaping the personality {*al-bushariyyah*}, and it is the vision of the Truth {*al-ḥaqq*} in its entirety.”

It is also similar to the definition of Ruwayim, who died in 303 Hijra, who said, “It is in getting the self to adhere to Allāh in what He wishes.”

A contemporary Ṣaykh, Sīdī Aḥmad al-Alawī al-Mustagḥanam, Allāh sanctify his secret, said, “He lowers his eyes from what is forbidden; he stops his ears from hearing the wrong like slander, backbiting, false testimony, and lies; his tongue is under pressure to leave what has been mentioned; he protects his stomach from the forbidden and leaves what is doubtful; he protects his private parts; he fears the poets when it comes to the grasp of, or movement to, something which might be forbidden that he might desire; he desists from any affair until he is sure what Allāh wishes in the matter; he purifies his heart of display, jealousy, vanity and all sickness.”

These are all definitions of Taṣawwūf as a means {*al-wusilah*}, which is to say they define the way that leads to the end {*al-ghayah*}. They are, however, not a definition of the end.

They are definitions of a path, a way, and at the same time they are also definitions of a person, a being, the “ṣūfī” as described by ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan:

The ṣūfī has four characteristics:

Imitation of the moral characteristics { <i>al-takḥaluqu-l-Ṣakḥlaq</i> } of Allāh.	Adhering to or staying close { <i>al-majāwaru-l-ʿamr</i> } to the orders of Allāh.
Avoidance of furthering the self { <i>tarku-l-intiṣār li-nafs</i> } in relation to Allāh.	Pursuing the unfolding { <i>al-mulāzamtu-l-bisāt</i> } of truthfulness with Allāh.

No doubt these statements on taṣawwūf or on the ṣūfī path {*aṭ-tarīqu-ṣ-ṣūfī*} concord with and complete what Ṣaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan says about the Truthful Ones {*aṣ-ṣidiqīn*} and their proximity to The Truth {*al-ḥaqq*}, praised be He, and their direct witnessing in the Sublime Exalted Assembly {*al-maʿāla-l-ʿālā*}<sup>110</sup>, which completes the picture of taṣawwūf. Thus we can say that it is:

Purification { <i>taṣfiyyah</i> } of the the entire soulself { <i>nafs</i> } as a means.	Proximity { <i>qurb</i> } and direct witnessing { <i>mushāhadah</i> } as an end
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Taṣawwūf, as such, includes both the means and the end: the Way {*at-tarīq*} and the Reality {*al-ḥaqīqah*}.

We will now attempt to draw a picture of the Way. To do this we must create a particular spiritual ‘atmosphere’ {*al-jawā-r-rūḥiyyā*}, which can best be accomplished through the emanation of an ephemeral fragrance which we hope Allāh will guide His slaves to breathe, and that He will guide them to it with it.

<sup>110</sup> *al-malā al-ʿālā*: from *malā* = crowd, gathering, assembly, congregation; council of elders, nobles and *ʿālā* = high, elevated, exalted; sublime, august. as a phrase = the heavenly host or the angels; ie, the realm of the *malakūt* = dominion.

## 1

## al-ʾikhlas: pure sincerity

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ

ʾALĀ LI-LLĀHI-D-DĪNU-L-KĥĀLIṢ

Surely the pure<sup>111</sup> Dīn belongs to Allāh.  
{39:3}

Since He, praised be He, has no need {*al-ghānī*} whatsoever there is no necessity to supply Him with partners {*shirk*} or to associate anyone or anything with Him. There must be at the beginning of the Way a sincere purity, an internal integrity, a loyal attachment {*al-ʾikhlas*}, which at its zenith is a “light from the light of Allāh which He has placed in the heart of the believing slave, which keeps that slave from looking to others for that which they cannot provide. This is the pure light of sincerity which is so bright that no Angel can register it {*fa-yaktubuh*} and no shayṭān can corrupt {*fa-yufsiduh*} or deflect {*lā yamiluh*} it.”<sup>112</sup>

Reference to this is made in the saying of Allāh on the tongue of His Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, in Ḥadīth Qudsī,

«الْإِخْلَاصُ سِرٌّ مِنْ سِرِّي إِسْتَوْدَعْتُهُ قَلْبُ مَنْ أَحَبَبْتُ مِنْ عِبَادِي»

“AL-ʾIKHLĀSU SIRRUM MIN SIRĪ ʾISTAWDAʿTAHU QALBU  
MIN ʾAḥBABTU MIN ʾINBĀDĪ”

“Pure sincerity is a secret from My Secrets that I have deposited in the heart of My slave.”

Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan said, “I was circumambulating {*ʿaṭwāf*} the Kaʿbah and searching in my innermost self {*sirr*} for sincerity. Suddenly I heard a voice calling to me saying, ‘How often do you draw near with those who draw near when I am the All-Hearing, the Near, The All-Knowing, the Knower? By my definition I will cause you to dispense with knowledge of the ancients and the moderns altogether save that of the Messenger and the Prophets, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon them all. It consists of four things: Sincerity on the part of one who is sincere to one who is sincere through Him for the sake of one who is sincere toward Him.

It is of two kinds: The pure sincerity of the Truthful Ones {*aṣ-ṣādiqīn*} and the pure sincerity of the Devoted Ones {*aṣ-ṣiddiqīn*}.

The sincerity of the Truthful Ones is for obtaining spiritual rewards {*al-ʾajr*} and benefits {*ath-ṭhawāb*}.

The sincerity of the Devoted Ones is a pure sincerity which is entirely for the purpose of arriving to The Truth {*al-Ḥaqq* = Allāh} and to nothing but or except Him.

<sup>111</sup> *khlṣ* = to be pure; unmixed, unadulterated; to be or become free, liberated, be cleared, to be rid (of); to be saved, rescued, escape (from); II to clear, to purify, refine, purge, rectify, redeem, deliver; III to act with integrity, with sincerity; treat fairly; IV to be dedicated; to be loyal. *ʾikhlas* = pure sincerity, sincere devotion, loyal attachment, sincere affection; sincerity, frankness, loyalty, faithfulness, fidelity, allegiance.

<sup>112</sup> *Durrat al-ʾAsrār* p.112

ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan describes the qualities of these Pure Sincere Ones {*al-mukhlisīn*} thus,

“These are the people whom Allāh has created for His Pure Worship and has purified for faithfulness to His Divine Unicity {*tawḥīdu rubūbiyah*} and the following of His Revealed Way {*sharīʿatahu*}.

“He has pleased them by the secrets of the Lights of His Presence {*bi-ʾanwāri haḍratihī*} and supported their spirits by the meanings of Spiritual Wisdom {*bi-maʿani-l-maʿarif*} and granted them His providential solicitude. He has caused their intelligence {*al-ʿaql*} to roam in His Vast Sublimity {*ʿaḍḥimatahu*} and enlightened the darkness of their nafs, thus removing them from the oppressive darkness of ignorance {*dḥulmu-l-jahl*}. He has guided them by the stars of knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} and the sun of His Spiritual Knowledge {*maʿrifatahu*}. He has consolidated their doctrinal understanding {*ʿaqāʾiduhum*} by clear proofs {*burhān*} from His Book and His Practice {*kitābuhu wa sunnatuhu*}. He obliterated their might by establishing the victory of His Wishes. He has concealed their will {*ʾirādatahum*} by the Supremacy of His Will, and He has beautified them with the embellishment of abstinence {*zuhd*}, made them to dwell in the condition of reliance {*tawakkul*}, honoured them with scrupulousness {*al-waraʿ*} and light of knowledge {*nūru-l-ʿilm*}, and widened their learning. He inspired them {*ʾilhamahum*} abundantly and munificently. He enriched them until they had no need of others.

“He made some from among them to be keys {*mafātih*} to open the hearts of mortals {*warā*}, and flowing springs {*yanābīʿa*} of the Great Wisdom {*al-ḥikmatu-l-kubra*} from which they both receive and give to the people secretly and openly. Some from among them are veiled by Destiny {*sataratahu-l-ʾaḡḍār*} in order that they might become isolated in the truth of their secret. You will not know them by their appearance, for their inner soul is with the Truth and only outwardly do they appear as other creatures. They are both present and not present due to their annihilation. Their outer appearance is poverty {*al-faqr*} and their internal reality is abundant wealth {*al-ghina*}. They are formed by the character {*yatakḥallaqūn bi-ʾakḥlaqu-n-nabbi*} of the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings be upon him, to whom Allāh said,

وَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنِي

WA WAJADAKA ʿAĀʾILAN FAʾAGḤNĀ

*and We found you impoverished and enriched {you}*

{93:8}

Did He, the Almighty, enrich him, blessings and peace be upon him, with money? Hardly, for it was he who tied a rock round his stomach to ward off hunger, and it was he who fed the entire army from a single plate; and it was he, eternal blessings and peace be upon him, who left Makkah on foot with nothing to eat; who mounted the *Burāq* and rode to the furthest place of prostration {*al-masjidu-l-aqsah*} in a flash, led the other prophets, peace be upon them all, in prayer; who ascended to the highest heavens and reached the tree of infinity {*sidratu-l-muntahī*} and reached the proximity of two bows' length. He saw what he saw and his heart was not deceived, neither did it deceive him.



وَالنَّجْمُ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ۖ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ۚ  
 وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۚ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۚ  
 عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ۖ ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ۖ  
 وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۖ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ۖ  
 فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ۖ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ۖ  
 مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ۖ أَفَتُمَرُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ ۖ  
 وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۖ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ۖ  
 عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۖ إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ۖ  
 مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ۖ  
 لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ۖ

WA-N-NAJĀMI ʾIDHĀ HAWĀ ۖ MĀ ḌALLA SĀḤIBUKUM WA MĀ GHĀWĀ ۚ  
 WA MĀ YANṬIQU ʿANI-L-HAWĀ ۚ ʾIN HUWA ʾILLĀ WAḤYUṆY-YŪHĀ ۚ  
 ʿALLAMAHŪ SHĀDĪDU-L-QUWĀ ۖ DHŪ MIRRAṬIN FĀ-S-TAWĀ ۖ  
 WA HUWA BI-LʾUFUQI-L-ʾAʿLĀ ۖ THUMMA DANĀ FA-TADALLĀ ۖ  
 FA-KĀNA QABA QŌWSAYNI ʾŌW ʾADĀNĀ ۖ FA-ŌWHĀĀ ʾILĀ ʿABĀDIHĪ MĀĀ ʾŌWHĀ ۖ  
 MĀ KADHĀBA-L-FUʾĀDU MĀ RAʾĀ ۖ AFATUMĀRŪNAHŪ ʿALĀ MĀ YARĀ? ۖ  
 WA LAQADĀ RAʾĀHU NAZLATAN ʾUKHṚĀ ۖ ʾINḌA SIDĀRATI-L-MUṆTAHĀ ۖ  
 ʿINḌAHĀ JANNATU-L-MĀʾWĀ ۖ ʾIDH YAGHSHĀ-S-SIDĀRATA MĀ YAGHSHĀ ۖ  
 MĀ ZĀGHĀ-L-BAṢĀRU WA MĀ ṬAGHĀ ۖ  
 LAQADĀ RAʾĀ MIN ʾĀYĀTI RABBIHI-L-KUBĀRĀ ۖ

{I swear} by the Star when it sets ۖ Your companion is neither astray nor is he deluded. ۖ  
 Nor he does not speak on a whim. ۖ {His speech} is naught but revelation revealed. ۖ  
 Taught him by one of Mighty Power. ۖ Possessed of strength. Standing poised. ۖ  
 While he was on the highest horizon. ۖ Then he drew near and hung, suspended, ۖ  
 till he was two bows length or nearer. ۖ Then He revealed to His worshipper what He revealed. ۖ  
 His heart did not lie in what it saw. ۖ Would you dispute with him [about] what he saw? ۖ  
 And truly he saw him yet another time. ۖ By the Cedar Tree at the utmost boundary, ۖ  
 near the Garden of Refuge. ۖ When there shrouded the Cedar Tree what shrouded it. ۖ  
 His eye neither wavered nor strayed. ۖ  
 Indeed, he saw the greatest among the Signs of his Lord. ۖ

{53:1-18}

Look to his, blessings and peace be upon him, fullness in both of his roles as man and messenger and the honour which was attached to his attributes. If you say he was just a man, I would say, “— yes, and a diamond is just a stone.” Among the worshipful slaves he is a prophet and a messenger who called by Truth to Truth. He endowed the Friends of Allāh with a portion of the heritage of prophethood. They are the people who have followed him with the utmost purity and sincerity, believing inwardly and outwardly in what he said of Him who held his life between His Hands,

«كَانَ اللَّهُ وَلَا شَيْءٌ مَعَهُ • وَهُوَ الْآنَ عَلَى مَا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ كَانَ»

KĀNA-LLĀHU WA LA SHĀYʿUN MAʿHU  
WA HUWA ALʾĀN ʿALĀ MĀ HUWA ALAYHI KĀN

“He is Allāh and there is no thing with Him and He is now as He was.”

They stationed themselves in the Station of Unicity {*maqāmu-tawhīd*}, removing themselves from the cravings of the self, and they disregarded their lot in this world. They follow their righteous ancestors {*ʿiqtidāʾ bi-salaf*}, may Allāh be content with them.

The goal of the Folk {*al-qawm*} is to attain to pure sincerity and singularity {*at-takhṣīs*}. If you truly look at their humility {*dhullihum*} and poverty {*ʿiftiqarāhum*} you will find glory {*al-ʿizz*} and untold riches {*al-ghina*} from their Master. The realization of their state, except for the walī at his ultimate end {*niḥāyatahu*} or the devotee {*ṣiddiq*} in his setting out {*bidāyatahu*}, is precious. In reality the destination {*al-ghāyah*} of the walī is the point of departure for the pure devotees {*aṣ-ṣiddiqīn*}.



“Now I will give you an open secret. Catch it firmly in both your hands.

‘Pay no heed to those who envy you!’

Allāh revealed to His Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him,

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ • مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ •  
وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ •  
وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ • وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ •

QUL ʿAʿŪDHU BI-RABBI-L-FALAQA • MIŪ SHARRI MĀ KHĀLAQA •  
WA MIŪ SHARRI GHĀSIQIN ʾIDHĀ WAQABĀ •  
WA MIN SHARRI-N-NĀFFĀTHĀTI FI-L-ʿUQADĀ •  
WA MIN SHARRI ḤĀSIDIN ʾIDHĀ ḤASADĀ •

Say: “I take refuge with the Lord of the crack of dawn • from the evil within His creation •  
and from the evil of the darkness when it gathers •  
and from the evil of those who blow on knots • and from the evil of an envier when he envies. •

{113:1-5}

“Do not ask me to make this solely for you as Allāh has meant to say,

‘Ask Me to protect you from the evil of those who envy, but do not ask Me to cut them off from you!’

Enviers come with a blessing {*maʿa niʿam*}.

You must have the blessing so you must have the grief {*fa-taʿsa*},

Yā miskīn {oh poor one}, if you want the healing {*ash-shifāʾ*}.

This healing may happen through the unveiling of a grave matter so do not crave it if you are veiled.”

## 2

## at-tawbah: returning repentant

The first thing a murīd travelling to Allāh should do is to make *tawbah* {which is to say, to return repentant to Allāh}. *Tawbah* begins with *ʿistighfār* {asking forgiveness of Allāh}. The *ḥaqīqah* of the *ʿistighfār* is that you should not shelter with any one other than Allāh, for the *ʿistighfār* is the shelter for the person from the punishment {*ʿadḥab*} of Allāh. We know this from His words,

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

WA MĀ KĀNA-LLĀHU MUʿADḤDĤIBAHUM WA HUM YASTGHĤFIRŪN

*Allāh would not punish them while they were seeking forgiveness.*

{8:33p}

The Shāykh said, “That Allāh has favoured them is obvious. Allāh has purified them by the water of His Favour and thus they have reached the rank of purity. The first act of purification, which is a necessary condition for following the ṣūfī path, is the turning away from that which is other than Allāh. Thus they offered their prayer and turned their face to Allāh and He communed with them with words delightful to the ear. He gave them to drink from the cups of love and He intoxicated them with His Wine. Then He gave them to be His Friends by an act of favour. When they were perfected and when He sent them forth to the people they became kings in the guise of the poor.

“The stay of kings is arms and contending helpers whilst the stay of the poor is the finding of sufficiency with Allāh and the patient bearing of His Decrees.

“Few are they who love them yet great is their significance. The stars are numerous but when the sun rises the stars pale to insignificance.”

وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ

WA QALĪLUM-MIN ʿIBĀDIYA-SḤ-SḤAKŪR

*And few of My worshippers are thankful.*

{34:13p}

This is the sunnah of Allāh with His Friends. So it is that the evidence of the excellence of the walī lies in the great number of his enemies and paucity of his helpers {*ʿanṣār*}. In consonance with the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, he knows full well,

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ

ʿILLĀ TAṢṢURŪHU FAQADĀ NAṢARAHU-LLĀH

*If you do not help him yet Allāh has already helped him...*

{9:40p}

As for his enemies, he pays them no heed, but rather incites them against himself, saying,

قُلْ أَدْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُونِ فَلَا تَنْظُرُونَ  
 إِنَّ وَلِيَّ اللَّهِ الَّذِي نَزَلَ الْكِتَابُ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ

QULI-DĀ-ʿŪ ShURAKĀĀʾAKUM THUMMA KĪYDŪNI FA-LĀ TANDHĪRŪN

ʾINNA WALLIYA-LLĀHU-L-LADHĪ NAZZALA-L-KITĀB;

WA HUWA YATAWALLA-Ş-ŞĀLIḤĪN

Say, "Call upon your partners, then plot against me, giving me no respite.

Truly my Protector is Allāh who sent down the Book,

and He protects the wholly righteous."

{7:195p-196}

### 3

### an-nīyah: intention

There must be *nīyah* {intention} for any deed that is undertaken or any affair that you depart from and it must be accompanied by sincerity. This entitles one to a reward {*ʿajar*} from Allāh for the deed."

The Prophet of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, said, "Deeds are by their intention and for everyone there is *their* intention. He who has the intention to migrate {*hijrah*} to Allāh and His Messenger, then his *hijrah* will be for Allāh and His Messenger. He who has the *nīyah* to make *hijrah* with worldly diversions {*ad-dunyah*} as his goal or for a woman in order to marry, then his migration will be to that."

The Shaykh said, Allāh be pleased with him, "The validity of religious works is by intention. The validity of the intention is by place {*maḥall*}, time {*waqt*}, modality {*kayfiyyah*}, meaning {*maʿnā*}. Purity {*ṣafāʾ*} concerns the place, success {*tawfiq*} concerns the time {*awqāt*}, freedom from fault {*ʿiṣmah*} concerns modality, and genuineness {*taḥqīq*} concerns its inner meaning. The soundness and the goodness of the purpose is to honour the right of lordship and to obligate the self to assume the quality of a servant. The place and time are at the beginning of the act. The perfection {*kamāl*} of the intention is the full realization of the original intention, and its time {*waqt*} is the commencement of the deed at the precise moment when the heart {*al-qalb*} and the limbs connect and correspond with one another. The essential reality {*ḥaqīqah*} of *nīyah* or intention or *al-qaṣd* {aspiration, object, goal} or *al-ʿazm* {determination, firm will, resolution} or *al-ʾirādah* {will, volition} or *al-mushṭāh* {yearning, craving, ardent desire} is the single-minded annihilation of every 'other' thing at the time of commencing the deed or action.

The Messenger of Allāh said,

«مَنْ صَلَحَتْ نِيَّتُهُ صَلَحَ عَمَلُهُ»

"MAN ṢALUḤATU NIYATAHU ṢALUḤA ʿAMALUHU."

He whose intention is good; his work is good.

With regard to this saying, the Shaykh said,



“Good intention with regard to what is between Allāh and you is the turning of your heart towards the veneration {*bi-t-taʿadhim*} of Allāh and the veneration of Orders of Allāh and the veneration of what Allāh has ordered. With regard to what is between the {other} worshippers {*ʿibād*} and you, it is the turning souls to Allāh by giving sincere counsel {*an-naṣīḥah*}, carrying out your obligations {*ḥuqūq*} toward them, giving up your privileges {*ḥudhūdḥ*}, discarding distraction {*al-mawārad*} with patience toward Allāh and trust in Allāh.”

Whatever the final outcome, the degree of sincerity in the intention will determine its reward {*aṭṭhawāb*} and development {*at-tarqī*}.

He said, “True intention is the absence of everything but the thing intended upon undertaking it, and its perfection is holding to that completely.

‘Oh worshipper of Allāh. Detach yourself from conversations with your lower self {*nafs*}, the desire of shayṭān, obedience to lust and the agitation of overwhelming desires {*zumanāʾ*} and you will be righteous {*ṣāliḥ*}. Fear Allāh in time of the involuntary thoughts {*khaṭrah*}, in time of zeal {*himmah*}, reflection {*muraqabah*}, and the agitation of inner thoughts and you will be trustworthy {*ṣiddīq*}. If any of these things troubles you, then forsake your means of livelihood {*asbāb*}, abodes, brothers, and places of temptation {*fitan*} and become an immigrant {*muhājir*}. But if you give in to any of these then turn to Allāh in repentance, seek pardon of Him, take refuge with Him, call unto Him for help and you will be a believer {*muʾmin*}. Make your armour to be purification, fasting, prayer, patience, performance of dhikr, recitation of the Qurʾān and disclaiming your own strength and power in favour of the strength and power of Allāh, and you will be in safety {*sālim*}. If you are overcome, take to your self faith {*īmān*} for a fortress, and if you are finally overcome then surrender the entire matter to Allāh. Incumbent upon you is faith, bearing witness to the Oneness of Allāh, and love of Allāh. Drown the world {*ad-dunya*} in the Ocean of Oneness before it drowns you.”

#### 4

### aṭ-ṭarīq al-qāṣḍ: the path of aspiration

The path of aspiration to Allāh the Most High has four constituent elements. The one who attains all four is of the True Devotees {*aṣ-ṣiddīqīnu-l-muḥaqqiqīn*}; who attains three is from the Friends Brought Near {*al-ʿawliyaʿu-l-muqarabīn*}; who attains to two of them will be of the Certain Witnesses {*aṣṣ-ṣuḥḥadāʾ-l-mūqinīn*}, and who attains one will be one of the Righteous Worshipers of Allāh {*ʿibādu-llahi aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*}.

The first is Remembrance of Allāh {*dhikr*}; it unfolds through righteous action and its fruit is light.

The second is Contemplation of Allāh {*tafkīr*}; it unfolds in patience and its fruit is knowledge.

The third is Poverty<sup>113</sup> {*faqr*}; it unfolds through thankfulness {*shukr*} and its fruit is thankfulness.

The fourth is Love {*ḥubb*}; it unfolds through loathing {*bugḥḍ*} the gross world and those who inhabit it,<sup>114</sup> and its fruit is the Union with the Beloved {*al-wuṣūl bi-l-maḥbūb*}.

<sup>113</sup> The poverty that is from everything that is other than Allāh to Allāh. (AḤM)

<sup>114</sup> Loathing the *dunyaḥ*, for its roots are in base desires (*shawāt*), and loathing for the people of the *dunyaḥ*, for they are the People of Agitating Diversions (*al-lāhwiyyīn*) and the People of Chaos (*al-ʿābithīn*). (AḤM)

## 5

## al-khālwah: seclusion

As one proceeds on the direct path {*aṭ-ṭarīqu-l-qaṣd*} to Allāh one should, in addition to consolidating and strengthening {*tadʿaīmā*} one's *tawbah* and anchoring {*tathbiytā*} one's sincerity, seek to seclude oneself with the Lord from time to time. This time of isolation or seclusion is what may be termed 'the period of the cave' {*fitratu-kahf*}, during which one concentrates on:

<i>dhikru-llāh</i> remembrance of Allāh	<i>al-murāqabah</i> internal contemplation	<i>at-tawbah</i> returning repentant	<i>al-ʾistighfār</i> seeking forgiveness
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The Shaykh said, "With regard to the people of Allāh and His elect {*khaṣṣ*}, they are a people whom He has drawn away from evil-doing and its sources and employed them for the doing of good and what comes from that. He made them to love spiritual retreats {*khaḷwāt*} and opened before them the path of spiritual communion. He made Himself known to them and they came to know Him; He showed His Love to them and they came to love Him. He guided them to the path which leads to Him and they took it and followed it so that they are with Him and they are His. He does not abandon them and they are not veiled from Him; rather they are veiled with Him from other than Him. They only know Him and love no one but Him."

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

ʿULĀĀʾIKA-L-LADhĪNĀ HADĀHUMU-LLĀH; WA ʿULĀĀʾIKA HUM ʿULU-L-ʾALBĀBĀ

*Those are the ones whom Allāh has guided — and those are the people of understanding.*  
{39:18p}

The Shaykh said, "Know that the perils of the *khaḷwah* for the novices {*ʿawāmm*} who are orienting themselves to Allāh by the path of spiritual knowledge {*maʿrifah*} and by uprightness in the way of spiritual science {*ʿilm*} are four: the soul's {*nafs*} attachment to secondary causes {*asbāb*}, the heart's {*qalb*} leaning in the direction of acquisition {of states}, the tendency of the intelligence {*ʿaql*} towards satisfaction with whatever intimacy may attach itself to it and, lastly, the suggestions of the Enemy in view of one's low desires which are contrary to the objective of undertaking the retreat.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ

WA IDh ʾAKhADhNĀ MITHĀQAKUM WA RAFʿANĀ FAWQAKUMU-Ṭ-ṬŪR

*And We took the covenant from you, and [caused] the mountain to tower above you.*  
{2:63p}

"If there should come to you some thought of attachment to secondary causes or of leaning in the direction of acquisition of states, return the self to the principle of spiritual knowledge {*maʿrifah*} of past experiences from among those who have decreed it and caused to pass over it and say to it, that you will never be provided for except by this means and from this direction. Constrain the *nafs* with *maʿrifah*, submerge the *nafs* in the Ocean of Oneness and say,

‘Whatever Allāh wills — is, and whatever Allāh has not willed — is not.’ Drown the world {*ad-dunya*} in the Ocean of Oneness before it drowns you.

“If you find that your intelligence {*‘aql*} is satisfied with whatever knowledge, light, guidance or ear whispered teaching has reached it, be not heedless of first and last things or of the action of the One who does what He wills and shows regard neither for future good deeds nor for past evil deeds.

“If you should experience the suggestions of the Enemy which are opposed to the true object of desire, know they come in two ways. By way of interest in the Final World. By way of favours or stations or states or degress in the stages of ascent. Both ways are opposed to the true objective, which is to become a pure servant and to find The Truth {*al-ḥaqq*} without any medium. Allāh requires that you be to Him a slave and that you want Him as your Lord. If He is a Lord to you then you do what is pleasing to Him. You are His slave and as such He does not permit you anything else in the way of realities {*ḥaqā’iq*}. So how with the desire of the mind {*al-‘amānī*}? Know this matter and learn to fear it. Seek the aid of Allāh and be patient.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

‘INNA ALLĀHA MA‘A-ṢĀBIRĪN

Truly Allāh is with the steadfast.  
{2:153p}

“If you are one of those from the grade of the elect who are directing themselves to Allāh, and if in your retreat you are beset by the whisperings {*wasāwis*} through something that seems like knowledge {*‘ilm*} that has come by way of inspiration {*‘ilhām*} and spiritual insight {*kashf*}, do not receive it but return to the decisive truth from the Book and the Practice {*kitāb wa sunnah*}. Know that which has occurred to you, if it is a true thing in itself, and if you have turned to a truth in His Book or to the sunnah of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, then with respect to that you would be without reproof. Say to yourself, “Allāh has warranted to me protection from error with respect to the Book and the Custom {*kitāb wa sunnah*} but He has not warranted it to me with respect to insight {*kashf*}, inspiration {*‘ilhām*} or spiritual witnessing {*mushāhadah*}.

“How is it that you have accepted knowledge by way of inspiration while you have not accepted it by referring to the Book and the Practice? So if you have accepted it by these two, what is the point of being seduced by the whisperings which excite your imagination? Learn this well, so that you may rest upon the clear proof from your Lord, and the vision will follow that. With clear proof there is neither error nor confusion, and Praise belongs to Allāh.

“If in your retreat it should occur to you to think of returning to the society of people in order to display to them what you have attained in solitude, then even in solitude you are still with the people and you have in no way gone out from them. Do not be deceived by the withdrawal of the body whilst your heart is with them. If anyone flees to Allāh — Allāh will provide a refuge. Fleeing to Him is characterised by aversion with respect to others and love in respect to The Truth {*al-ḥaqq*} whilst seeking refuge and protection.

وَمَنْ يَعْتَصِم بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

WA MAʿNY-YAʿTAṢIM-BI-LLĀHI FAQADĀ HUDIYA ʿILĀ ṢIRĀṬIM-MUSTAQĪM

*And who holds fast to Allāh, so it is he who is guided to the Straight Path.*

{3:101p}

“If the thought of setting limits should occur, then struggle against any forces that work to that end. Direct your concern to Allāh with holy fear in order that he may make a way out for you that you cannot reckon.

“If the voices {*hawātif*} of the Truth {*al-ḥaqq*} attract you, their perils lie in imagining sensations connected to the unseen reality. Do not refer these voices to those perceptions, else you be of the ignorant ones, and enter into nothing of that with your intelligence or mind {*ʿaql*}. Be as you were before they came until Allāh explains and illuminates everything.

إِنَّ وَلِيَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِى نَزَلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ ۖ وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ

ʿINNA WALĪYYA-LLĀHU-L-LADḥĪ NAZZALA-L-KITĀB;

WA HUWA YATAWALLA-Ṣ-ṢALĪḤĪN

*It is He who sent down the Book and it is He who befriends the righteous*

{7:196}

“If one’s secret self {*sirr*} is disordered by mingling {*kḥālṭ*} with anything in the realm of wrongdoing {*dḥanb*} or shame {*ʿayīb*}, or if one is secretly pleased or proud of a good deed or pleasant state {*ḥālun jamīl*}, one should seek pardon for all and everything {*al-jamīʿ*}<sup>115</sup>. Asking pardon {*al-ʿistighfār*} is ordained {*wājib*} for us in the Laws of Allāh and, as far as others go, this is in accord with the sunnah of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, who, even after he was assured of the erasure of all his wrongs { 48:2 and 94:1}, past and future, continued to make *ʿistighfār* at least seventy times daily. If this was the case with one who was spotless {*maʿṣūm*} and never committed any wrong, what then of us who are pure only from time to time and now and then?”

The fruit of seclusion is the granting of certain spiritual gifts {*bi-mawāhibu-l-minah*} by Allāh.

These are four:

*kashfu-l-ghīṭā*  
unfolding the veil

*taḥqīqu-l-maḥabbah*  
realization of love

*tanazilu-r-raḥman*  
descent of compassion

*lisānu-ṣ-ṣidq fi-l-kalimah*  
the tongue of truth in speech

<sup>115</sup> Both the negative and positive aspects, ie both wrong deeds and self-satisfaction, for both are repugnant.



Allāh says,

وَ إِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ  
فَأْوُوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ  
يَنْشُرْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَرْفَقًا ۝

WA ʾIDhI-ʿTAZALTUMŪHUM WA MĀ YAʿBUDŪNA ʾILLA-LLAHA  
FAʾAWŪ ʾILA-L-KAHFI YANShURULAKUM RABBUKUM-MIR-RAḤMATIHĪ  
WA YUHAYY LAKUM-MIN ʾAMRIKUM-MIRFAQĀ ۝

*When you have withdrawn from them and that which they serve other than Allāh,  
take refuge in the cave, and your Lord will spread out His Mercy for you  
and provide you with ease in your situation ۝*

{18:16}

وَ أَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ  
إِذِ اتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ۝  
فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا  
فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا

WA-DhKUR FI-L-KITĀBI MARYAMA  
ʾIDhI-Ō-TABADhAT MIN ʾALIHĪHĀ MAKĀNĀN ShARQIYYĀ ۝  
FA-T-TAKhADhAT MIN DŪNIHIM HĪJĀBĀ  
FAʾARSLANĀĀ ʾILAYHA RŪHANĀ FA-TAMATHhThALA LAHĀ BASHĀRAN SAWIYYĀ ۝

*And remember in the Book, Maryam,  
how she withdrew from her people to a place in the east ۝  
and she veiled herself from them.  
Then We sent to her Our Spirit that appeared to her in the likeness of a well proportioned man. ۝*

{19:16-17}

فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَ كُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ۝  
وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِنَا وَ جَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ۝

FA-LAMMĀ AʿTAZA LAHUM WAMA YAʿBUDŪNA MIN DŪNI-LLĀH  
WA WAHABNA LAHŪ ʾISHĀQA WA YAʿQŪBĀ: WA KULLĀN JAʿALNĀ NABIYA ۝  
WA WAHABĀNA LAHUM-MIR-RAḤMATINĀ  
WA JAʿALNALAHUM LISĀNA ŠIDQIN ʿALIYĀ ۝

*So when he withdrew from them and what they worshipped other than Allāh;  
We gave him ʾIshāq and Yaʿqub — and We made each to be a Prophet. ۝  
and We gave them from Our Mercy.  
And made them to [speak to the people] in the lofty tongue of Truth. ۝*

{19:49-50}

## 6

## al-jihād: struggle

Every murīd must wage jihād!

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

ʿINNA-Sh-ShAYṬĀNA LAKUMĀ ʿADUWWUM MUBĪN

*Truly the shayṭān is your obvious enemy.*  
{7:22p}

Jihād must be waged against the enemy. Whoever desires that the *shayṭān* should have no hold over him should take refuge with Allāh from the *shayṭān* and then correct and make sound {*fa-l-yaṣaḥiḥa*} their ʿimān as well as making firm their reliance {*at-tawakkul*} on, and their worshipful service {*al-ʿibadah*} of Allāh, the Most High, Who says,

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

ʿINNAHŪ LAYSA LAHŪ SULTĀNUN ʿALA-L-LADḥĪNA ʿĀMANŪ  
WA ʿALĀ RABBIHIM YATAWAKKALŪN ❀

*Truly he has no authority over those who believe and those who place their trust in their Lord.*  
{16:99}

إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ

ʿINNA ʿIBĀDĪ LAYSA LAKA ʿALAYHIM SULTĀN

*Over my worshipful slaves you shall have no authority*  
{17:65p}

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ  
إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

WA ʿIMMĀ YAŖZAGḥANNAKA MINA-Sh-ShAYṬĀNI NAZGḥUŖ FA-S-TAʿIDḥ BI-LLAH; INNAHŪ  
SAMĪʿUN ʿALĪM ❀

*And if you are inclined to evil by a provocation from Shayṭān, then seek refuge in Allāh.  
Truly He is Hearning, Knowing.*  
{7:200}

You may ask, how can ʿimān be corrected and made unblemished {*tuṣaḥiḥa*}? This may be accomplished by thankfulness for blessings and bliss {*an-niʿamā*}, steadfast patience {*aṣ-ṣabr*} in times of hardship and travail, and contentment with the Decrees {*al-qaḍāʾ*}.

As to the soundness {*siḥḥa*} of one's reliance {*tawakkul*}: this can best be brought about by making *hijrah* from your self {*nafs*}, becoming oblivious {*nasīyān*} to the creation, clinging to Truth and sticking to the *dhikr*.

If anything or anyone attempts to obstruct you from your honesty towards Allāh — stand firm!

You should know that there are four modes of contemplation that will help to vanquish the *shayṭān*:

Contemplating what brings you nearer to Allāh  
and doing it.

Contemplating what drives you from Allāh  
and avoiding it.

Contemplating your past good deeds,  
thanking Allah and seeking His pardon.

Contemplating your past bad deeds  
and asking His pardon.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً  
فَاثْبُتُوا وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

YĀ-ʾAYUHA-L-LADHĪNĀ ʾĀMANŪ IDHĀ LA-QĪTUM FĪPATĀN  
FA-TH-BUTŪ WA-DH-KURU-LLAHA KATHĪRAL-LAʿALLAKUM TUFLIHŪN ﴿٨٤﴾

*Oh you who believe, whenever you encounter a company of the enemy,  
stand firm and remember Allāh abundantly, that thus you may be successful. ﴿٨٤﴾*

{8:45}

The rectification of worship {*al-ʿubudīyah*} is brought about by arriving at clarity in the realm of true knowledge of the nature of human attributes, which is that they are poor {*faqr*} in relation to the sublimity of Allāh, that they are impotent {*ʿajz*} in relation to His power {*quwwatahu*}, and that they are base {*dhul*} in relation to His Glory {*ʿizz*}, praised be He.

## 7

### an-nafsu-l-ammārah: the appetitive self

Talk of *shayṭān* leads us to talk about the appetitive self, which has four distinct qualities or centres:

a centre with a lust {*shahwah*}  
for contravention {*mukhālafah*}

a centre with a lust for obedience  
only for the sake of appearance

a centre which inclines  
to comfort and ease {*ar-rāḥāt*}

a centre that is weak in the performance  
of what Allāh orders {*al-mafrūdāt*}

فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ  
وَاحْصُرُوهُمْ وَاقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ

FA-QĀTULŪ-L-MUSHRIKĪNA ḤAYTHU WAJATTUMŪHUM WA KHUDHŪHUM  
WA-H-ṢURŪHUM WA-QĀ-UDŪ LAHUM KULLA MARṢADĀ

*...kill those who set up partners with Allāh wherever you find them, capture them  
and confine them, and lie in wait for them everywhere in ambush.*

{9:5p}

If you wish to perform jihād against the *an-naḥsu-l-ammārah*, then dominate it and govern {*fa-ḥakum*} it with knowledge {*bi-l-ʿilm*} in each of its moves {*harakah*}.

Strike {*ʿiḍrabiha*} it with fear {*kḥawf*} of Allāh in its every oscillation of thought {*kḥaṭrah*} and imprison it in the constraining grip {*qabāḍah*} of Allāh wherever you are {*ʿaynamā kunta*}.

Complain of your impotence {*ʿajazak*} to Allāh whenever you are mindless {*ghaflah*}. The *naḥsu-l-ammārah* is hard to control and only Allāh encompasses or comprehends it {*wa qad ʿahāṭu-llāhu biha*}, so if He subjugates {*sakḥrat*} to you any matter, then remember the blessings {*niʿamah*} of Allāh upon you and say,

سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ

SUBĤĤĤANA-L-LADḥĪ SAKḥKḥARA LANĀ HĀDḥĀ WAMĀ KUNNĀ LAHŪ MUQĤRINĪN

*Glory be to Him Who subjected this to us when we ourselves were not able.*  
{43:13p}

In the end, the death of the *naḥsu-l-ammārah* can only be brought about by knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} and spiritual wisdom {*maʿarifah*} and adhering to the Book and Practice {*al-kitāb wa-s-sunnah*}.

The therapy {*ʿilāj*} for those who have not seen with the true seeing {*bi-ḥaqāʿiqu-l-mushāhadāt*} has four components: two inner treatments {*ʿilājān bi-bāṭniayn*} and two outer {*ʿilājān bi-ḍahiriayn*}:

#### The internal remedies

Relinquishing {*ṭaraḥa*} the *naḥs* to Allāh  
and emptying oneself of all power and authority

Total and complete surrender to Allāh and  
relinquishment of all choice {*ʿikḥtiyār*}

#### The external remedies

Amputation {*qaṭʿa*} of disobedience and  
rebellion {*al-māʿṣiyah*}

Perfect performance of the ordained  
{*al-wajīb*}

وَ اذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَ تَبَتَّلْ اِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلاً

WA DḥKURI-S-MA RABBIKA TABATTAL ʿILAYHI TABĤTĪLA ☪

*and remember the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with all devotion ☪*  
{73:8}

So stick to the *dhikr* and seclude yourself with Allāh and take refuge in Him from all things.

The Shāykh says, “That which cuts the faqīr off from arrival {*wuṣūl*}, veils his heart from certainty {*yaqīn*} and distracts his mind from evidence of the Truth is two things: Entering into the affairs of the other world without the Gift of His Beloved, and entering into the affairs of the world {*ad-dunyā*} according to his own reckoning and management.”



## 8

## ad-dunyā wa duniyawi: the gross world and worldliness

When we mention *shayṭān* and when we mention the *nafsu-l-ammārah*, then surely we are mentioning the gross world.

The gross world, for which there will be no rendering of accounts either now or in the future, is the world in which one neither chose before it was nor when it was and the loss of which is no cause of remorse.

The one who is free {*hurr*} and generous {*karīm*} is the one who receives it with honour and relinquishes it with honour and it leaves no mark upon his heart. The view of aṣḥ-Shādhūlī is that what is important is not to become a *‘abdu-d-dunyā* {the slave or devotee of the world}. You can have it all or lose it all. Having the world or losing the world is ultimately unimportant as long as the heart remains unattached to either worldly gain or loss in accord with the Words of Allāh:

لَكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ

LAKAYLA TA’SOW ‘ALĀ MĀ FĀTAKUM WA LĀ TAFARAḤŪ BI-MĀĀ ‘ATĀKUM

*that you not grieve for what has escaped you nor rejoice in what comes to you*  
{57:23p}

Although we have spoken about the world as the ṣūfī sees it, we want to elaborate on this in order that we might provide great clarification, for this way of looking at the world — the ṣūfī way — may perhaps be obscure to some.

The worldly life {*duniyawi*} that is hated by the ṣūfī is that life of distractive action {*tashghala*} and agitation {*mashāghib*} which unbalances {*tulahī*} and enslaves {*tasta‘bid*}; the life of contention and futile dispute {*munaza‘āt*}; the life of perverse desires {*aṣḥ-shahawāt*}; the life of shayṭānic incitements {*an-nazaghat*}; the life of insubstantiality {*wahy*} and illusion {*wahm*}; the life of play {*al-l‘ab*} and show {*fakharah*} and heedless unconsciousness {*al-ghaflah*} before Allāh.

Wealth, real estate, abundance, prosperity, affluence are not prohibited either in Ṣlām or for or by the ṣūfiyyah. What is prohibited is the impure {*ḥarām*} and attachment to worldly possessions or position. The following statement of Shaykh ‘Abū-I-Ḥasan may clarify certain aspects of the issue:

“Whenever Allāh looks with favour upon one of His worshippers or slaves, He assigns him further service to perform {*‘ubūdiyyah*} and withholds from him personal affluence or fortune {*ḥudhūdḥ nafsihi*}, makes him to turn about at will in his slavery {or worship}; he does not look back upon the fortunes that have been withheld, but rather views them as if they were purposefully removed or providentially denied to him.

“Whenever Allāh looks with contempt on a slave with regard to his activities, he assigns to him personal prosperity and withholds from him His slavery, and the slave turns at will within his lustful desires {*shahwāt*}, and worship {*‘ubūdiyyah*} is remote from him even though he may engage in it with his outward form.

“In yet another form, both contempt and friendship {*wilāyah*} are the same, as in the [station of] the greatest trustworthiness and the greatest friendship, prosperity, good fortune, affluence {*al-ḥudhūdḥ*} and obligations

{*ḥuqūq*} are, to one endowed with spiritual insight, all the same, since whatever one receives or fails to receive, it is in every case through Allāh and by Allāh and with His Knowledge.”

The following supplications {*adʿiyah*} of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan afford us with a viewpoint of the *ṣūfīyyah* in regards to the *dunyā*:

أَعْرِفَ اللَّهَ ثُمَّ اسْتَزِرْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتَ غَيْرَ مَكْبٍ  
عَلَى حَرَامٍ وَلَا رَاغِبٍ فِي حَلَالٍ

ʿAʿARFA-LLAHU THUMMA ʾISTARAZAQHU MIN ḤAYTHU SHʾTA  
GHAYRA MAKIB ʿALĀ ḤARĀMA WA LĀ RĀGHAB FĪ ḤALĀL ..

Know Allah and then ask Him for sustenance from any where,  
neither inclining towards the forbidden nor desiring the permitted.

يَا اللَّهَ، يَا وَلِيَّ، يَا نَصِيرُ، يَا غَنِيَّ، يَا حَمِيدُ،  
أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ دُنْيَا لَا تَكُونُ فِيهَا نَصِيبٌ لَوْجَحِكَ  
وَمِنْ عَمَلٍ آخِرَةٍ يَكُونُ فِيهَا حَظٌّ لَغَيْرِكَ  
أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ كُلِّ حَرَكَةٍ تَعْرِى مِنَ الْأَقْتِدَاءِ بِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِكَ  
وَمِنْ كُلِّ ضَرُورَةٍ لَا يُوْدِي إِلَى حَقِيقَةِ مَعْرِفَتِكَ  
وَأَعْكِفْ قَلْبِي فِي حَضْرَتِكَ، وَأَغْنِنِي عَنْ رِعَايَتِي بِرِعَايَتِكَ  
وَإِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

YĀ ALLAH, YĀ WALĪ, YĀ NAṢĪR, YĀ GHĀNĪ, YĀ ḤAMĪD,  
ʿAʿUDḥU BIKĀ MIN DUNYĀ LĀ TAKUNA FĪHĀ NAṢĪBU LI-WAJḤAK  
WA MIN ʿAMALU ĀĀKHĪRATU YAKŪNA FĪHĀ HAḌḥ LI-GĀYRIK  
ʿAʿUDḥU BIKĀ MIN KULLI ḤARAKATI TAʿRĪ MINA-L-ʾAQTADĀʾI  
BI-SUNNATI RASŪLIK

WA MIN KULLI ḌARŪRATIN LA YUʾADĪ ʾILĀ ḤAQĪQATUM MAʿARIFATUK  
WA ʾAʿKAF QALBĪ FĪ ḤAḌRATIKA WA ʾAGḥNĪ ʿAN RIʿĀYATĪ BI-RIʿĀYTUK  
WA ʾINNAKA ʿALĀ KULLI ShĀYIN QADIR

Oh Allāh, Oh Friend, Oh Grantor of Help, Oh Provident, Oh Praiseworthy.  
I take refuge in You from a world that has in it no portion of Your Presence  
and from any deed that has in it an allotment on behalf on anyone else.  
I take refuge in You from all action that alienates me from the practice of Your Messenger  
or from any need that does not lead to the reality of Your Knowledge.  
Allow my heart to abide in Your Presence  
and save me from my concern for my self by Your Concern for me.  
Truly you have power over all things.  
{66:8}

اللَّهُمَّ وَسَّعَ أَرْزَقْنَا، وَكَثَرَ أَضْيَافُنَا،  
وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ مَرْضَاتِكَ  
قَصْدًا بَلَا إِسْرَافٍ وَلَا تَقْتِيرٍ،  
وَوَفَّقْنَا لَذَلِكَ، وَاهْدِنَا بِهِدَايَتِكَ،  
وَأَخْلَصْنَا بِإِخْلَاصِكَ عَنْ إِخْلَاصِنَا  
وَقِنَا مِنَ الشَّحِّ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْمَنِّ، وَمِنَ التَّهْمَةِ فِي الرِّزْقِ

ALLAHUMMA WASI' A 'ARZAQINA, WA-K-ThIRA 'ADYĀFUNA,  
WA JA'ALNA MINA-L-MUTAQĪNA FĪ SABĪLI MURḌĀTIKA,  
QAṢADAM BI-LĀ 'ISRĀFI WALĀ TAQTĪR,  
WA WAFQAQANA LI-DhĀLIKA, WA-H-DĪNA BI-HADĀYATIKA,  
WA 'AKhLIṢNA BI-'IKhLĀṢIKA 'AN 'IKhLAṢINA  
WA QINA MINA-Sh-ShĀHI WA-L-BUKhLI WA-L-MANI WA-MĪN T-TAHMATI FI-R-RIZQ

Oh Allāh, enlarge our daily sustenance and increase our guests;  
and make us from the People of Taqwah on the path of Your contentment,  
direct us neither to extravagance or miserliness,  
grant us success in that and guide us by Your Guidance.  
Make us to be sincere by Your Sincerity on the strength of sincerity  
and keep us from avarice, miserliness, indebtedness and anxiety about daily sustenance.<sup>116</sup>

## 9

### al-'ubudiyah: servitude or worship

If Allāh wishes to honour {*akram*} a slave or worshipper {*abd*}<sup>117</sup> in his action and in his repose He does so by bestowing upon him worship of — or servitude to — Himself. Thus does He veil His slave from his own inclinations and veil to him his allotment, so that the slave has no need to seek after them for they are flowing from what has been written {*al-qadr*} whilst the slave is occupied in his devotions.

If Allāh wishes to dishonour {*hān*} a slave in his action and in his repose, He does so by first bestowing upon him an inordinate portion and then veiling him from devotion and servitude so that thus he revels in his lusts and his devotion is cast aside, though in his outer behaviour and for appearances he may pretend otherwise.

Slavery, servitude, devotion, worship {*al-'ubudiyah*} the implementation of orders and the avoidance of what has been prohibited. It is the laying aside of one's own personal will power. The slave who reaches to the purification of the heart {*bi-ṭahiru qalbahu*} from the *shayṭān* and from the *nafsu-l-ammārah* and from the *dunyā* does so by abundant attention to devotion and worship and so gains great good fortune...

<sup>116</sup> The first *du'ā'* is from *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*, p 111. The second *du'ā'* is from *Durrat al-ʿAsrār*, p 164.

<sup>117</sup> *abd* = Throughout this text this word is variously translated as slave, servant and worshipper, depending on both the mood and the context of the particular selection. In all cases the source word in Arabic is *abd*.

## 10 aṭ-ṭāʾāt: obedience

One who has been honoured by Allāh with the gift of worship and devotion is guided to obedience at all times, for every time has a unique Divine Claim {*bi-ḥukmu-r-rububiyah*} on the slave. Accordingly do not delay the obedience due in one time to another. The punishment is the loss of both the gift and its time.

The intrinsic value of obedience and its preservation {*al-ḥafadhah*} cannot be refuted.

Someone once asked Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan, “What advantage do I gain from my obedience and what do I lose as a result of my rebellion {*maʿasiyati*}?”

He replied, may Allāh sanctify his secret, “From obedience you gain increased knowledge, light and love. From rebellion you gain worry, sorrow, fear and hope. Oh my brother. Apply the five immaculates {*al-muṭaharāt*} in speech and the five immaculates in deeds. Flee from personal power and strength in every state {*fī-jamiʿa-l-ʾahwāl*} and drown your intelligence {*ʿaqlik*} deep within the eternal meaning {*al-maʿāni-l-qāʾimah*} of your heart. Leave everything to your Lord and Sustainer. Safeguard {*ahāfaḍh*} the orders of Allāh and He will safeguard you. Safeguard Allāh and you will find Him in front of you. Devote your self to Allāh and give thanks.”

The five immaculates in speech are:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ  
وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

SUBḤĀNA-LLAHI WA-L-ḤAMDU-L-LLAHI WA LĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLA-LLAH  
WA-LLAHU ʾAKBAR:

WA LĀ ḤAWLA WA LĀ QŪWATA ʾILLA BI-LLAHI-L-ʿALIYU-L-ʿADḤĪM

Glorified is Allāh and Praise to Allāh. There is no deity except Allāh  
and Allāh is the Greater.

There is no might and there is no power other than with Allāh, the All-High, the Sublime

The five immaculates in deed are:

Ṣalātu-l-Fajr Dawn Prayer	Ṣalātu-ḍḥ-Ḍḥur Noon Prayer	Ṣalātu-l-ʿAṣr Afternoon Prayer	Ṣalātu-l-Maghrib Evening Prayer	Ṣalātu-l-Iṣḥāʾ Night Prayer
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Renunciation of personal power and authority is brought about by saying the following,  
both believing it and acting upon it:

وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

WA LĀ ḤAWLA WA LĀ QŪWATA ʾILLA BI-LLAH

There is no might and there is no power other than with Allāh.



## 11

## darajāt wa darajāt: levels and degrees

From the knowledge of certainty {*ilmu-l-yaqīn*} accorded by Allāh is the certainty that even if you are noughted {*taṣfur*} in the eyes of creation, as long as your dealings are in accord with the *sharīʿa* and are in accord with your true nature {*tabīʿa*}, your position with Allāh is not made to be as nought.

From the knowledge of the source of certainty {*ainu-l-yaqīn*} accorded by Allah is the cessation of paying attention to the creation when confronted with difficulty and hardship {*ash-shadāid*}, and registering in their brightest indications the benefits which Allāh has bestowed upon you. ..

From the knowledge of the truth of certainty {*haqu-l-yaqīn*} accorded by Allāh is merging with a thing or event as though you were the thing or event itself, as one whose ship sinks beneath the sea upon being overwhelmed by waves.

Some vanish {*yadḥab*} among the Annihilated and reach a higher degree {*darajah*}, and there are others who are revived {*yaḥyā*} and remain {*yabqī*} among the Survivors {*al-bāqīn*} and are of no use to others for they are Veiled {*al-mastūr*} from the bulk of creation. There are yet others who are revived {*yaḥyā*} and remain {*yabqī*} among the Survivors {*al-bāqīn*} and they serve as the powerful Examples {*al-waṣāfīn*} to both humans and jinn {*ath-thaqalālīn*}. Some will become great leaders, {*al-imām al-akbar*}, the unique pole of solace {*al-faridu-l-quṭbi-l-ghawth*} who has combined the Names, the Attributes, the Lights, the Characteristics {*al-akhlāq*} and that beyond which the hearer can't hear, for their degree is beyond what can be comprehended except by its like. Some will have no standing or degree with the Friends {*al-awliyāʾ*}, with the People of Taqwah, with Pure Worshippers and the Ascetics {*al-zahād*}. Those with no degree are from the people who looked for proofs {*ahli-n-naḍḥar bi-l-dalīl*} because they themselves never saw. Outside of all of these are those who pretend to means and states {*ahli-l-wusāʾil bi-l-amāli wa-l-aḥwāl*} and those who are Uncertain {*ahli-l-takhlīṭ*} both of speech and action {*al-aqwāl wa-l-aʿfāl*}.

Allāh says, ..

وَمَنْ يُهِنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُكْرِمٍ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ

WA MAÑY YUHINI-LLAHU FA-MĀ LAHŪ MIM MUKRIM;

ʾINNA-LLĀHA YAFʿALU MĀ YASHĀʾ

*And who Allah abases no one honours — truly Allāh does as He wishes.*

{22:18}

## 12

## adh-dhikr: remembrance

The murīd who is a traveller {*as-sālik*} should firmly take hold of the remembrance {*adh-dhikr*}. He should: “Knock upon the door of *dhikr* and seek shelter within it, avowing his need of Allāh whilst at the same time observing silence towards his fellows. With every breath he should watch over his inner self {*as-sirr*} so as to guard it from conversing with his lower self if he desires to have true spiritual wealth {*ghinnah*}.” ..

The Shaykh says, “I advise you, oh brother, to practice the *dhikr* as it safeguards you from the punishment of Allāh {*adhābu-llāh*} in both the *dunyā* and the *ʾākhirah*. Get a hold of it {*tamsakbih*} and persist {*dāum*} in the practice of the *dhikr*.” He especially recommends the following formula:<sup>118</sup>

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ  
وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

ʾAL-HAMDU-L-LLAHI WA-ʾS-TAGHIFIRU-LLAH  
WALĀ ḤAWLA WALĀ QŪWATA ʾILLA BI-LLAH

Praise to Allāh and I ask forgiveness of Allāh.  
There is no might and there is no power except with Allāh.

He said, “Repeat these remembrances {*adhkār*} at all times and persist in remembrance and you will extract their blessings {*barakataha*}, ʾinshāʾllāh. The one whose tongue is wet with the *dhikr*, whose heart is filled with *shukr* {thankfulness} and whose body carries out the orders; that one will be of the Righteous Ones {*aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*} — ʾinshāʾllāh.”

It should be taken into consideration that however the ṣūfiyah have praised the *dhikr* and spoken of its principles and the benefits to be derived from it, still yet they have not given *dhikr* its full right. Their view is that — after repentance {*tawbah*} and sincerity {*ʾikhlāṣ*} — *dhikr* is the door that leads to the higher levels and grades as well as to the stations {*al-manāzil*}. *Dhikr* enables the advanced traveller to fold up and diminish {*tawā*} the distances leading to the ascensions {*al-mʿaraj*} and the intimacies {*al-qurbāt*} and to the opening {*al-fath*} and heavenly inspiration {*al-ʾilhāmāt*}.

The ʾImām al-Qushayrī says, “*Dhikr* is the first principle {*rukn*} on the Path of Arrival {*ṭarīqu-l-wuṣūl*} to The Reality {*al-ḥaqq*}, praise be to Him the Most High, and it is the firm support {*al-ʿumdaḥ*} on the Path of the Folk.”

“No one will arrive to knowledge of Allāh except through the constancy of their remembrance.”

آتَلْ مَا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ  
إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ  
وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

ʾUTLU MĀĀ ʾUḤIYA ʾILAYKA MINA-L-KITĀBI WA ʾAQIMI-Ṣ-ṢALĀH;  
ʾINNA-Ṣ-ṢALĀTA TANHĀ ʿANI-L-FASHĀʾI WA-L-MUNKAR;  
WA LA-DHĪKRU-LLAHI ʾAKBAR; WA-LLĀHU YAʿLAMU MĀ TAṢNAʿŪN ﴿٢٩﴾

Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish the Ṣalāh .  
Truly the Ṣalāh preserves you from lewdness and evil.  
The Remembrance of Allāh greater — and Allāh knows what you do. ﴿٢٩﴾

{29:45}

<sup>118</sup> see pp 64-66 in Volume One for a brief discussion of different formulæ and xx in the present volume.

For these and many other reasons Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan was greatly concerned with the *dhikr*, and much has been attributed to him in this context. Accordingly, within the limits imposed by the size of this book, we have related in the eighth chapter selected illuminations {*ʿishrāqāt*} in the hope that they will benefit our readers.

### 13 al-waraʿ: extreme caution, impeccable care and total scrupulousness

With *dhikr* come states {*al-ʿahwāl*} and stations {*al-maqāmāt*}.<sup>119</sup>

Among them is *waraʿ*<sup>120</sup>, which is the sure path for those who seek to speed their inheritance {*warith*} and quickly reap their reward {*thāwāb*}.

Waraʿ causes one to take from Allāh and by Allāh, to speak by Allāh, work for Allāh and by Allāh, through clear evidence {*bayyīnatu-l-wāḍiḥah*} and conscious insight {*al-baṣīrahtu-l-fāʾiqah*}.

In all cases one does not plan nor does one chose, wish, think, behold, speak, move except by Allāh and for Allāh to the best of one's knowledge, and one is savaged {*hajam*} by knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} of the reality {*ḥaqīqah*} of the power that has united one in the source of the all {*majmaʿūna fī ʿaynu-l-jamaʿ*}.

Neither do they aspire to a higher degree nor do they fall to a lesser degree. Allāh, as a reward for their preservation {*al-ḥafḍh*} of the Revealed Law {*ash-sharʿ*}, exercises His *waraʿ* on them.

Who does not exist by virtue of this inheritance of heavenly knowledge and action is veiled by the *dunyā* and spent claims. His inheritance is the glorification of creation {*at-taʿzaza bi-l-khalq*} and the magnification of his own image {*al-ʿistikabāra ʿalā mithlahu*} which, in turn, forces him to seek to prove the existence of 'god'<sup>121</sup>. That is a great loss and we pray that Allāh protect us from this.

Those who are wise will steadfastly petition Allāh that they be preserved from knowledge of their own 'piety' {*waraʿ*}, for they who do not increase in both knowledge and deed in respect to their true state of abject poverty {*iftiqār*} and humility {*wāḍʿā*} in relation to their Creator and His creatures will perish.

Praise be to Allāh, who has extricated many of the Righteous {*aṣ-ṣalīḥīn*} from dwelling on their righteousness in the way of promoting the good {*maṣlaḥa*}, just as He has cut off {*qaṭaʿa*} corrupt people {*al-fasadīn*} due to the corruption of their existence.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>119</sup> states and stations; passing and abiding, ephemeral and fixed, transient and established etc. see Volume One, p 44.

<sup>120</sup> Waraʿ piety, piousness, godliness, godfearingness: caution, cautiousness, carefulness; timorousness, shyness, reserve, in contrast to disorder, aggressive display and sloppiness.

<sup>121</sup> Note the insight of Ibn al-ʿArabī that it is not so much that man is created in the image of Allāh (*khalāqa-llāhu ādaama ʿalā suratihi*), but rather it is in most cases that man has created 'god' in his own image and likeness.

<sup>122</sup> Ibn ʿAtāʾ-Ilāh as-Sakandarī said, "Understand Allāh the way His ʿawliyāʾ do and follow in the way of those who love Him. The type of *waraʿ* that the Shaykh mentioned when he said, "It causes one to take from Allāh and by Allāh, to speak by Allāh, work for Allāh and by Allāh, through clear evidence (*bayyīnatu-l-wāḍiḥah*) and conscious insight (*al-baṣīrahtu-l-fāʾiqah*). What is described here is 'he *waraʿ* of the *al-ʿabdāl* ('substitutes') [Volume One pp 33,40,91], *ṣidiqīn* (truthful devotees), and not the chameleons (*al-mutanaṭṭīn*), the thinkers of evil (*siʿi-dh-dhān*) who are overcome by illusion (*ghalabatu-l-waham*)."

14

az-zuhd: abstinence

The reality {*al-ḥaqīqah*} of abstinence or asceticism is that it is what empties the heart of everything else other than the Lord, the Blessed, the Most Most High.

15

at-tawakkul: reliance

Reliance on Allāh {*tawakkul ʿala-llāh*} is to turn away {*ṣarafa*} everything from the heart but Allāh. Its reality {*al-ḥaqīqah*} is to forget {*nasiāna*} everything except Him and its secret {*sirr*} is that it is only the Truth {*al-ḥaqq*} that is existent in everything you encounter {*talqāh*} and the secret of the secret {*sirru-l-sirr*} is to acquire mastery of yourself {*malik wa tamlik*} so that you love what He loves and you desire what He desires.<sup>123</sup> *Tawakkul* is not sound {*yusih*} unless the person is *mutaqi* <sup>124</sup>. *Taqwāh* is not sound unless the person has *tawakkul*.

16

ar-riḍā: contentment

Being content with Allāh is contentment with the Decrees of Allāh {*qaḍāʾ*} and not the decrees of the self {*nafs*}.

Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan says, “Discard {*ʾalqa*} your self at the gate of contentment {*bābu-r-riḍā*}, rid your self of your resolutions {*ʾazāʾim*} and your desires {*ʾirādatik*}.”

17

al-maḥabah: love

It is with love {*al-maḥabah*} that we seal {*nakhtim*} the Path {*at-ṭarīq*}.

Love {*maḥabah*}, contentment {*riḍā*}, asceticism {*zuhd*} and reliance {*tawakkul*} form the four Carpets of Dignity {*basāṭu-l-karāmah*} described by Shaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan:<sup>125</sup>

A love that keeps you from loving anything or anyone else except Allāh.	Contentment in which your love is united to His Love.
Abstinence that makes you entitled { <i>yuhāqqiq</i> } to His vastness { <i>bariyahu</i> }	Reliance on He Who provides you with insight into His Power.

The beautiful sayings of Abū-l-Ḥasan on the subject of love {*maḥabah*} are to be found in all the biographical books on him. He says, may Allāh sanctify his secret and perfume his resting place,

“He who loves Allāh and loves for Allāh will be — by love — a perfected *walī*.”

<sup>123</sup> *Durrat al-Asrār* p.48

<sup>125</sup> *biṣāṭu-l-karāmah*; there are many ways this can be read. It could be ‘the noble simplicities’ or ‘the noble carpet’, with carpet meaning ‘ground’ or ‘basis’; it can also mean the ‘vast miracles’, or alternately ‘the ground of glory’.



“A true lover is the one whose heart has no ruler {*sultān*} except the Beloved; who has no will except for the Will of the Beloved; who has no desire other than to desire the Beloved. As a result, the true *walī* has neither fear of nor hatred for death. For Allāh has said,

قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا  
إِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنْكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ  
فَتَمْنُوا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ❀

QUL YĀĀ-ʾAYYUHA-L-LADHĪNA HĀDŪ  
IN ZAʿAMTUM ʾANNAKUM ʾOWLİYĀĀʾU LI-LLĀHI MIŪ DŪNI-N-NĀSI  
FA-TAMANNĀWU-L-MŌWTA ʾIN KUŪTUM ṢĀDIQĪN ❀

Say: Oh you who are Jews!  
If you assert that you are the favored friends of Allāh apart from other people  
then long for death if you are truthful. ❀  
{62:6}

Thus the true friends of Allāh do not hate death, for they know death is only by the Will of Allāh. Allāh loves the one who has no beloved other than Him and one who loves for no other sake than for His sake. He loves to meet the one who has tasted intimacy {*dhawqa ʾuns*} with his Lord.

Love is revealed to you by ten:

The Messenger of Allāh blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him		
The Veracious ʾAbū Bakr aṣ-Ṣadīq	The Discerner ʿUmar al-Farūq	
The Companions aṣ-Ṣaḥābah	The Followers aṭ-Ṭabīʿīn	The Friends of Allāh al-ʾAwliyāʾ
The Learned who Guide to Allāh al-ʿUlamāʾ-l-hadātu ʾilā-Llāh		
Martyrs aṣḥ-Ṣuḥadāʾ	The Wholly Sound aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn	The Believers al-Muʾminīn

after Belief {*al-ʿimān*} Love splits into ten avenues:

<i>as-sunnah wa al-bidʿah</i> customary practice and innovation	<i>al-hidāyat wa aḍ-ḍallālah</i> guidance and deviation
<i>aṭ-ṭāʿah wa al-mʿāṣiyah</i> obedience and rebellion	<i>al-ʿadl wa al-jūr</i> justice and tyranny
<i>al-ḥaqq wa al-bāṭal</i> truth and deception	

If you love or hate, then love or hate for Him, and do not care which of the two is abiding.

If you find that your heart does not cling to those who are present or absent or dead, then your love will be free from bias and truly for Allāh. Two of the attributes may be combined in the same person. Then you should give both attributes their due.

If love appears in the first ten then watch — do you find any traces of desirous love {*hawa*} in that love? Consider the love that comes to you from your brothers, the veracious devotees {*aṣ-ṣidiqīn*}, the trustworthy guides {*al-maṣḥayākḥ aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*}, the guided scholars {*al-ʿulamāʾ u-l-muhtadīn*}, those who are present, those who are absent or dead.

If you find that your heart is not attached to either those who are present or those who are absent or dead then the love you have has been freed from desire and the love of Allāh has been firmly fixed and established {*yathbit*}. But if you find anything that still links you to those you love, then resort to the 'sciences' {*al-ʿulūm*} and search deeply for guidance to understand if that which is under consideration is ordered {*al-wajib*}, strongly recommended {*al-mandūb*}, acceptable {*al-mubah*}, disliked {*al-makruh*} or prohibited {*al-maḥḍūr*}."

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh said in commenting on all of this,<sup>126</sup>

"You must know that when the Shaykh says, 'He whose spiritual authority {*wilayat*} is firmly established does not hate death,' he has provided the *murīdīn* {seeker students} with a scale by which they can ascertain the degree of spiritual authority of either those who are spoken of as ʿawliyāʾ or who claim themselves to be of the ʿawliyāʾ."

"This scale, put simply, is, 'Do you love death?' The Shaykh goes on to comment, 'It is only normal for the self {*nafs*} to imagine and arrogate to itself high ranks. Allāh says,

قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

QUL HĀTŪ BURHĀNAKUM ʾIN KUNTUM ṢĀDIQĪN

Say: Bring proof for what you say if you are Truthful.

{2:111}

and He said,

إِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ  
فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ❁

IN ZAʿAMTUM ʾANNAKUM ʾAWLIYĀʾU LI-LLĀHI MĪN DŪNI-N-NĀSI  
FA-TAMANNAWU-L-MŌWTA ʾIN KUŤTUM ṢĀDIQĪN ❁

If you assert that you are the favored friends of Allāh apart from other people  
then long for death if you are truthful. ❁

{62:6}

<sup>126</sup> In the Arabic editions this comment is a footnote. In view of its importance to the English speaking readers we have placed it in the body text, as the comment contains many important understandings on the subject of love and death and their reality (*ḥaqīqah*), in truth perhaps not known by or unfamiliar to the reader.

"The Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace, said {*ḥaditha*} to Ḥārithah, "Everything has its reality {*ḥaqīqah*}. What is the reality of your belief {*ʿimān*}?" And he also said to him, 'How did you awaken today?' Ḥārithah said, 'I woke as a true believer {*al-muʿminā ḥaqān*}. No one loves death who is existent {*al-baqāyā*}. No one insists on repeating mistakes. Allāh has made the desire for the destiny of death {*ṭhamanu-l-mawt*} to be the witness {*shāhadā*} of the spiritual authority of the walī and the lack of desire for anything else to be a witness against those who desire and follow their own desires.' Allāh says,

وَأَقِمْوْا لِّلْوَزْنِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ

WA ʾAQĪMU-L-WAZNA BI-L-QISṬI WA LĀ TUKḤSIRŪ-L-MĪZĀN

*Weigh with justice and do not skimp in the balance.*

{55:9}

"That is the balance of your deeds {*al-ʿaḥqāl*} and your states {*al-aḥwāl*}, the scale of the circle of degrees {*dāʾiratu-l-ratib*} which we have mentioned before. As for these deeds and states: if you are confused in any matter and you do not know whether you should take it or leave it, or if you are in a state where you are not sure if you faithfully or truthfully fulfilled a deed or if, on the contrary, you have fulfilled it from out of your own desire, then simply imagine to yourself dying at that moment.

"Having thus imagined your death at that moment in the midst of the deed or the state, now see if it produces in you a state of *hazama* {desire for flight or a feeling of defeat or vanquishment}. Any state that is truthful and correct will not produce this *hazama*, whereas any deed or state that is accompanied by the feeling of desire for flight is false and deceptive {*bāṭal*}."

الْمَوْتُ حَقٌّ • الْحَقُّ يَهْزِمُ الْبَطْلَ

AL-MAWTU ḤAQQ:

AL-ḤAQQI YAHZIMU-L-BATIL

DEATH IS TRUTH:

TRUTH PUTS DECEPTION TO FLIGHT

This has been sealed by the sayings of Allāh:

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ  
فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ

BAL NAQĀDḤIFU BI-L-ḤAQQI ʿALA-L-BĀṬILI FA-YADĀ MAGḤUHŪ

FA-IDḤĀ HUWA ZĀHIQĀ:

*Nay, but We hurl the truth against deception and it is vanquished,  
and behold deception vanishes*

{21:18}

قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي نَقَذَفُ بِالْحَقِّ عِلْمَ الْغَيْبِ ﴿٤٨﴾

QUL ʾINNA RABBĪ NAQĀDHĪFU BI-L-HAQQĀ: ʿALLĀMU-L-GHUYŪBĀ ﴿٤٨﴾

Say: 'My Lord hurls the Truth — He is the Knower of the Unseen'

{34:48}

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

WA QUL JĀĀʾA-L-HAQQU WA ZAHAQA-L-BĀṬIL:  
ʾINNA-L-BĀṬILA KĀNA ZAHŪQĀ ﴿٨١﴾

And say: 'Truth has come and falsehood has vanished - surely falsehood shall ever vanish.'

{17:81}

Your state of Truth will never be defeated by death, for Truth cannot overcome Truth.

فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

FA LĀ TAMŪTUNNA ʾILLĀ WA ʾAŅTUM MUSLIMŪN

So do not die unless you are of the surrendered ones.

{2:132}

The Shaykh says, "The heart of the worshipful slave receives love from Allāh. The self {*an-nafs*} consequently inclines to His obedience. The intelligence {*al-ʿaql*} shelters within His Knowledge {*maʿarifatahu*}. The spirit {*ar-rūḥ*} clings to His Presence {*ḥaḍratahu*}. The secret inner self {*as-sirr*} is submerged in witnessing Him {*mushādatahu*}. The worshipful slave asks and it is given and the slave is opened by His words of intimacy {*munājatahu*} and dressed in the shroud of nearness {*bisātu-l-qurbah*} and cohabits {*yamassa*} with virgin realities {*ʾabkāru-l-ḥaqāʾiq*} and confirmed sciences {*ṭhīyābātu-l-ʿilm*}. Due to this it is said that the ʾawlīyāʾ Allāh are brides {*ʿarāʾis*}, and brides are not seen by criminal evil-doers {*al-mujrimūn*}. "

"Someone said, 'I have known love.' and he was asked,

'What is the drink of love?

What is the cup of love {*kaʾssi-l-ḥub*}? Who is the bearer of the cup {*as-sāqī*}?

What is the taste {*adh-dḥawq*} of love?

What is drinking {*ash-sharāb*}?

What is enough {*ar-ray*}?

What is drunkenness {*as-sakira*}? What is sobriety {*aṣ-ṣahw*}?"

He answered,

'The drink is the light radiating from the beauty of the Beloved.

'The cup is the tender mercy {*lutf*} that carries that light to the lips of the heart.

'The bearer of the cup is the Great Support {*al-mutawālī-l-ʾakbar*}

of His chosen friends and the righteous ones of His slaves.



‘He is Allāh;

The Knower of Destinies and the requirements {*maṣāliḥ*} of His beloveds.

If for anyone the veil of this beauty is opened and he takes a sip or two and then the veil is closed

That one will yearn forever.’

If anyone drinks for an ‘hour’ or two they become a true drinker.’

If anyone drinks deeply

until their blood and veins and joints are suffused with the inherent lights of Allāh they are sufficed.’

If anyone drinks until they become unconscious of matter and reason

to the point they neither know what they say nor what is said

that one is a drunkard.’

Cups may pass around them and states may come and go; change.

They return to remembrance,

obedience & awareness

This is the time of sobriety

Time for the widening of perception and the increase of knowledge.

In the nights of their being they are guided by the stars of wisdom and moon of unity

The days of their life are illuminated by the sun of ma‘arifah.”

أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

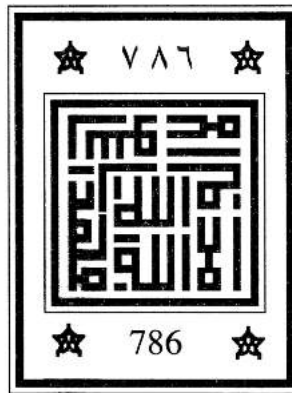
*They are the partisans of Allāh*

*And are not the partisans of Allāh those who prosper?*

{58:22p}

The stations {*al-maqamāt*} of devotion, abstinence, reliance, contentment, and love {and others} are the result of and the fruit of ‘dhikr’ which is based on sincerity, turning in repentance, servitude, devotion and righteousness.

The aspirant {*mūrīd*} will not rise except upon the foundation of the Way of the Folk which is ‘dhikr’.



## ASCENSIONS & VISIONS

Dhikr is a ladder {*miʿraj*} leading to ascensions {*maʿārij*} and visions {*al-marāʾya*} that are fruits {*natāʾij*} of the travel to Allāh along the Way of the Ṣūfī. In this chapter we shall recount some examples of these from our Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh preserve his secret.

### 1

“I saw that I was in the company of the Prophets, peace be upon them all, and the Pure Devotees {*aṣ-ṣidiqīn*}, may Allāh be content with them, and my wish was to stay with them so I said,

‘Oh Allāh, cause me to take their path but spare me the hardships which you inflicted on them for they are strong and we are weak.’

I was told,

Continue and say, ‘In whatever You have Decreed support us as You supported them.’”

### 2

“I saw that I was in the Supreme Realm {*al-mahal al-ʿaliya*} and I said, “Oh Allāh, what states are most beloved by You? What words do You find the most truthful? What deeds best lead to You? I pray You support and guide me.”

“I was told,

“The best states are contentment {*ar-riḍā*} brought about by direct witnessing {*shāhadah*}. The most truthful words are those of the one who is saying, ‘LĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLĀ-LLĀH’ with purity. The best deeds are those which lead to His Love and rise from hatred of the gross world and people of the gross world<sup>126</sup> whilst [one continues in] conformity {*maʿa-l-muwāfaqah*} [to the orders of Allāh].

### 3

“I saw that I was standing in front of my Lord and He said,

‘Do not be sure of My Plans in any event. The ocean of My Knowledge cannot be encompassed.’”

### 4

“I saw that I was making circumambulation {*ʾaṭūf*} of the Kaʿabah and I was appealing {*tālabbā nafsi*} to my self to be sincere and searching in my secret self {*sirrī*} for that sincerity {*ʾikhlāṣ*} when I heard a call,

“You ask of what is base and vile {*yadandana*} whilst I am The Hearer {*as-samiʿ*}, The Near {*al-qarīb*}, The Knower {*al-ʿalīm*}, The Greater {*al-khabīr*}. I will not endow with the knowledge of Those Who Come {*al-ʾawalīn*} and Those Who Shall Come {*al-ʾakhirīn*} save only the Knowledge of the Messenger and the Knowledge of the Prophets.”

<sup>126</sup> This does not refer to the hatred of the world of Allāh’s creation as such but rather to the hatred of lust and idle desire, agitation and seductive illusory visions and the people who are involved in these pursuits or who provide them for others.

## 5

"I said after some misfortune happened, "We belong to Allāh and to Him we shall return."<sup>127</sup>

"I pray to You, oh Allāh, to indemnify me for my loss and replace it with something better.

A voice in my inner secret self said, "Forgive me for it, for its effects, for its connections, for everything that it brings forth and everything that was before it or will come after it."

When I said these words my pain [over the loss] was alleviated.

Had all the worlds {*dunyā kulluhā*} been involved with it then still it would have been nothing to me. What I have found in the coolness of contentment and surrender {*baridu-l-riḍā wa taslīm*} is more beloved by me than all [the things of the worlds]."

## 6

He, may Allāh's contentment be on him, wrote to Shāykh 'Abī Yaḥyā, "For twelve years I have been coming and going according to what has been ordered for me in respect to the travel of spirit to the 'awliyā' of Allāh. I have never seen you except that I found you to be in a pure spirit by dint of your measure of understanding and discernment {*al-ʿaqūl*}, compassionate to the self {*an-nufūs*} and at ease {*yastriḥ*} in the inner secret self, pliable {*dḥʿan*} in the face of the Orders and the focal point of many crossroads {*muftariq*}."

## 7

"One night I read in my *wird*<sup>128</sup> the saying of Allāh,

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ۖ وَبَقِيَ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ۖ

KULLU MAN ʿALAYHĀ FĀN ۖ

WA YABĀQĀ WAJHU RABBIKA DḤŪ-L-JALĀLI WA-L-ʾIKRĀM ۖ

*Everything upon it that exists shall vanish ۖ*

*Yet shall there remain the Face of your Lord — Sublime — Noble ۖ*

{55:26-27}

"I saw Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣadiq, may Allāh be content with him, in my sleep and he said to me, "'Be in touch with what remains {*yabqī*} and leave what is perishing {*yafnī*}. Be beyond {*tajal*} what is perishing and be glorified {*takram*} by what remains.'"

## 8

"I had a friend with whom I used frequently to discuss the Unicity {*tawḥīd*} of Allāh. One night in my sleep and it was as if I was speaking with him, I said,

"Oh ʿAbdu-Llāh, if you seek to be beyond blame {*lawm*} get The Criterion {*al-furqān*}<sup>129</sup> on your tongue and behold the totality of your inner secret self {*as-sirr*}."

<sup>127</sup> Commonly said when one hears of death or major misfortune. Qurʾān 2:156

<sup>128</sup> see pp 211-216 Arabic section Volume I: *Orisons*

<sup>129</sup> *al-furqān* = the proof, the criterion, the evidence. A name used by Allāh for al-Qurʾān on five occasions {2:185} et. seq..

## 9

I saw the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, who said to me,

“Tell so and so [here he mentioned a name] to read these words. Whenever he reads them Mercy {*rahmah*} shall fall upon him like rain,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بَدَىٰ مِنْهُ الْحَمْدُ  
وَإِلَيْهِ يَعُودُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ  
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ،  
اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي شُرْكَى وَكُفْرِي وَتَقْصِيرِي  
وَ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

AL-ḤAMDU LI-LLAHI-L-LADḤĪ BADPA MINHU-L-ḤAMD  
WA ʿILAYHI YAʿUDU KULLI SHAYʿIN KADḤĀLIK  
LĀ ʿILĀHA ʾILLA-LLĀH  
ALLAHUMMA-ḠH-FIR LĪ SHĪRKĪ WA KUFRĪ WA TAQQAṢIRĪ  
WA-ḠH-FIR LI-L-MUʾMINĪN WA-L-MUʾMINĀT

Praise be to Allāh from whom the praise originated and to Him all things shall return  
there is no deity except Allāh  
Oh Allāh forgive me my idolatry and hiding and shortcomings  
and forgive the believing men and the believing women.

## 10

“One of the fuqarāʾ asked my permission to attend *samāʿ*<sup>130</sup>. I was pondering this when I saw my master {ʿustādḥi}, may Allāh be content with him, in a dream. In his right hand he was holding the Glorious Qurʾān and a book of Ḥadīth of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. In his left hand he was holding some papers. He said to me in a very solemn manner,

“Will you leave the immaculate knowledge {*al-ʿulūmu-z-zakiyyah*} for the dry withered knowledge {*ʿulūmu dhawā*} of ruinous passion {*al-ʾahwaʾi-r-ridiyyah*}?”

He that immerses himself in that will be a slave who is enslaved to his own evil inclinations {*marqūqu hawahu*} and secret lusts {*ʾasīr li-shawāṭahu*}. They agitate {*yastafzūn*} the hearts of those who are astray and blind. They lack the will for either good works {*ʿamal al-khayr*} or seeking forgiveness and they sway to the sound of the singing youth {*tatamilūna ʿinda samāʿaha tamāyal aṣ-ṣabīyān*}.”

<sup>130</sup> spiritual concert which is usually typified by singing of religious songs containing provocative words and often accompanied by rhythmical movements with the aim of invoking ecstasy. Since the Shaykh is known to have conducted and taken part in circles of dhikr and ḥadrah it would seem, especially considering his teachers' {Shaykh ibn Maṣḥish} mention of “swaying to the sound of singing youths” that he is referring here to particularly jalali outer form, often containing certain magical sexual connotations and sometimes connected to patterns of folk healing & exorcism {*az-zarr*}, which often constitutes an almost parallel ‘folk religion’ in many rural parts of the Muslim world. This practice is used by both Orientalists and Reactionaries, Rationalists and Modernist Muslims as a means of denigrating *all* ṣūfī gatherings without discrimination or knowledge.



“If the transgressors do not cease their transgression Allāh will turn their sky to become their earth and their earth to become their sky.”

“I was taken aback by this and I said to him, may Allāh be content with him, “But the nafs are earthly and the rūh {spirit} is heavenly.”

He said, “Oh ‘Alī. If the spirit is flowing with the rain of knowledge and the self is firmly fixed with good deeds, all good will come. If the self gains the upper hand over the spirit there will be drought. Things will be turned upside down and evil will result. Cling to the Book of Allāh for it is guidance, and to the words of the Messenger for they are healing. You will be in good shape when you prefer them and evil befall those who leave them. The People of Truth {āhli-l-ḥaqq} stand aside from futile speech and if they hear the Truth they will come to it.”

وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْلَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا

WA MAN YAQĀTARIF ḤASANATAN-N-NAZIDLAHŪ FĪHĀ ḤUSNĀ

*and whoever performs a good deed We shall increase its goodness to him*  
{42:23}

## 11

He said, may the contentment of Allāh be upon him,

“I once thought I was nothing and that I had neither stations {al-maqāmāt} or states {al-’aḥwāl}. I was plunged {faḡhamasat} into a house of musk — to perpetually abide therein {dadūām} — to the point where I could no longer smell. I was told,

“A sign of abundance is the loss of abundance due to its being an excess.”

## 12

He said, may the contentment of Allāh be upon him, “It was said to me, ‘If you want My contentment {ridā’i} it will come from My Name and from Me and not from your name and not from you.’

“I said, ‘How is that?’ and He said,

‘My Names precede My Grants {’aṭā’i}.

My Names are from My Attributes {ṣifātī}.

My Attributes are erected {qā’imah} on My Essence {dhātī}

and My Essence shall not perish {la yamḥaqq}.

“The slave has worldly names and exalted names. His exalted names are found in the saying of Allāh contained in the Generous Reading {al-qur’ānu-l-karīm = al-Qur’ān}, “Those who repent, those who worship, those who praise, those who travel, those who bow down, those who prostrate, those who order that which is good and forbid that which is detestable and preserve the limits, those who believe, those who in the worship are humble, those who turn away from idle words, those who pay the Zakat, those who guard the sanctity of their bodies, those who observe their trusts and covenants.”

As in His Saying,

التَّائِبُونَ الْعَبِدُونَ الْحَمْدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ  
الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ  
الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ  
وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

AT-TĀ'IBŪNA-L-ʿĀBIDŪNA-L-ḤĀMIDŪNA-S-SĀĀ'IHŪNA-R-RĀKĪʿŪNĀ-S-SĀJIDŪNA-  
L-ʾAMIRŪNA BI-L-MA'RŪFI WA-N-NĀHŪNA ʿANI-L-MUNKARI  
WA-L-ḤAFIDhŪNA LI-ḤUDŪDI-LLAH: WA BASHhShIRI-L-MUʾMINĪN.

*Those who repent, those who worship, those who praise, those who travel, ..  
those who bow down, those who prostrate,  
those who order that which is good and forbid that which is detestable and preserve the limits  
§ and give good tidings to the Believers*

{9:112}

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ  
إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ  
فَمَنْ أَبْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

QAD ʾAFLAH -L-MUʾMINUN ALLADhĪNA HUM FĪ ṢALĀTIHIM KhĀShĪʿŪN  
WA-L-LADhĪNA HUM ʿANI-L-LAGhWI MUʿRIDŪN  
WA-L-LADhĪNA HUM LI-Z-ZAKĀTI FĀʿILŪN  
WA-L-ADhĪNA HUM LI-FURŪJIHIM ḤAFIDhŪN  
ʾILLA ʿALĀĀ ʾAZWĀJIHIM ʾAW MĀ MALAKAT ʾAYMĀNUHUM  
FAʾINNAHUM GhĀYRA MALŪMĪN  
FAMANI-B-TAGhĀ WA RAĀĀʾA DhĀLIKA FAʾŪLĀĀʾIKA HUMU-L-ʿĀDUN  
WA-L-LADhĪNA HUM LI-ʾAMĀNĀTIHIM WA ʿAHDIHIM RĀʿŪN  
WA-L-DhĪNA HUM ʿALĀ ṢALAWĀTIHIM YAHĀFIDhUN

*Successful are the Believers  
Those who are humble in their Ṣalāt  
and those who turn away from idle words and those who pay Zakāt  
And those who guard the openings of their bodies  
except from their wives or those whom their right hands possess, for then they are not to blame.  
- and those who covet and seek beyond that overstep the limits.  
And those who observe their trusts and covenants and those who safe guard their Ṣalāt*

{23:1-9}

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ  
الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

ʔULĀĀʔIKA HUMU-L-WĀRITHŪN  
AL-LADĥĪNA YARITHŪNA-L-FIRDAWS • HUM FĪHA KĥĀLIDŪN

*Those are the inheritors.  
They shall inherit Paradise, therein they shall abide forever*  
{23:10-11}

and again

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ  
وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ  
وَالْقَنَاتِينَ وَالْقَنَاتَاتِ  
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ  
وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ  
وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ  
وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ  
وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ  
أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

ʔINNA-L-MUSLIMĪNA WA-L-MUSLIMĀTI  
WA-L-MUʔMINĪNA WA-L-MUʔMINĀTI  
WA-L-QĀNITĪNA WA-L-QĀNITĀTI  
WA-Ṣ-ṢĀDIQĪNA WA-Ṣ-ṢĀDIQĀTI WA-Ṣ-ṢĀBIRĪNA WA-Ṣ-ṢĀBIRĀTI  
WA-L-KĥĀSHĥĪNA WA-L-KĥĀSHĥĪNĀTI WA-L-MUTAṢADDIQĪNA WA-L-MUTAṢADDIQĀTI  
WA-Ṣ-ṢĀʔIMĪNA WA-Ṣ-ṢĀʔIMĀTI  
WA-L-HĀFIDĥĪNA FURŪJAHUM WA-L-HĀFIDĥĀTI  
WA-Dĥ-DĥĀKIRĪNA-LLĀHA KATHĥĪRĀN WA-Dĥ-DĥĀKIRĀTI  
ʔAʕADDA-LLĀHU LAHUM-M-MAGĥFIRATAN WA ʔAJĀRAN ʕADĥĪMĀ

*Truly the self-surrendered men and the self-surrendered women  
and the believing men and the believing women and the obedient men and the obedient women  
and the truthful men and the truthful women and the patient men and the patient women  
and the humble men and the humble women and the charitable men and the charitable women  
and the fasting men and the fasting women  
and the men who guard their bodily openings and the women who guard  
and the men who remember Allāh abundantly and the women who remember.  
Allāh has multiplied for them forgiveness and a sublime reward*

{33:35}

The worldly base names are known: the rebellious {*al-ʿāṣin*}, the liar {*al-kadhdhāb*}, the sinful {*al-mudhnib*} and others like them. In the same way that you abolish your base names with your exalted names you can abolish your names with His Names and your attributes and qualities with His Attributes and Qualities because when the transient is mixed with the Eternal it will have no existence.

If you call Him saying; *Yā Ghafūr* {Oh Forgiver}, *Yā Tawwāb* {Oh Pardoner}, *Yā Qarīb* {Oh Near} *Yā Mujīb* {the Answerer} *Yā Wahhāb* {Oh Bestower}, you receive a bestowal or grant for your self, and there descends upon your self something from on high.

Similarly if you concentrate on your own base and worldly names like the oppressor {*adh-dhallām*} or the adulterer {*al-fāsiq*} you veil your self by them and isolate your self in them.

If you call upon Him by His Name ‘the Most High’ {*Yā ʿAlī*}, contemplating all the time His Lofty Attributes and His True Essence, you abolish your names and existence and become noughted {*lā wujūd*}. This is the Station of Non-Existence {*maḥalu-l-fanāʾ*} and, for some, it leads to the Station of Existence after Nothingness {*maḥalu-l-baqāʾ*}.

وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

WA ʾANNA-L-FADLA BI-YADI-LLAHI YUʾTĪHI MAY-YASHĀʾ

WA-LLAHU DhŪ-L-FADLI-L-ʿADhĪM

*and the bounty is in the Hand of Allāh; and He gives it to whomsoever He chooses  
and Allāh is the Possessor of Infinite Bounty.*

{57:29p}

### 13

“I was occupied deep in the night in the contemplation of the Unknown {*al-ghayb*} when Allāh bestowed upon me knowledge of inestimable value. I traversed {*saʿiyat*} the Unknown, moving in beauty. I said to myself,

“Isn’t ‘his better than seeking one’s needs {*al-hawaʾij*} from the people? Being with Allāh is more fulfilling than being immersed in the affairs of people even though it is permitted by the Law.

“As I was thinking this I fell into sleep and saw in a ruʾyā a torrent which was falling and encircling me in every direction. It was carrying off the filth of the earth on my right and on my left. I started wading to get out of it but I saw no land on all four sides to which I could escape. I surrendered and took my stand in it like a post or a firmly rooted palm tree. I said within myself,

“Surely it is from the bounty of Allāh {*min faḍli-llāh*} that I can stand in this filth and yet it does not affect me.’

“A handsome man appeared and said, ‘It is because you are a man of Taṣawwuf that you have been exposed to the affairs of the people, the ordering of which is at the behest of the King, al-Ḥaqq. Whatever Allāh orders, you are thankful; whatever He decrees you are content. The ordering of them which obliges you to give thanks is not any more perfect than their lack of being ordered which obliges you to be content. Allāh has taught me knowledge that dwells in the essence of my self {*dhatu-n-nafsī*}, departing not from it but adhering to it like whiteness to white and blackness to black. He is Allāh — there is no deity other than Him.’”



وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ  
رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ

WA MĀ MIN ʾILĀHI ʾILLA-LLĀHU-L-WĀḤIDU-L-QAHHĀR  
RABBU-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-ʾARḌ WA MĀ BAYNAHUMĀ-L-ʿAZĪZU-L-GHĀFFĀR

*There is not any deity but Allāh; The One, The Omnipotent  
Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; The All-Mighty, The Forgiving*  
{38:65p;66}

“Consider the Divinity {*al-ulūhīyah*}, the Solitariness {*al-fardānīyah*}, the Glory {*al-ʿizz*}, the Unicity {*al-wahadanīyah*}, the Lordship {*ar-rubūbīyah*}, the Victoriousness {*al-qāhirīyah*}, the Pardon {*al-maghfirah*}, and how all of these are connected in a single statement. Pardon is a descent upon the person who has spiritual knowledge {*maʿarifah*} of Allāh like the torrent bearing filth on the ʿarif bi-llāh, and Allāh firmly roots whom He chooses to stand firm in the midst of it without any of the filth {*al-ghuthāʾ*} touching him.”

“I awoke from my sleep having been granted a great secret, praise be to Allāh.”

## 14

“Whenever Allāh opened anything to me in this life I was always happy with it either because it helped me or it helped me to help others. I thank Allāh and praise Him. Thankfulness {*ash-shukur*} is spiritual knowledge {*maʿarifah*} which dwell in the heart and a word that is everlastingly on the tongue. I used to combine the two {the heart and the tongue} until it became my habit. One night I slept and in my sleep I saw my teacher, Allāh be merciful to him, who said to me,

“Ask the protection of Allāh from the evil of the world {*shari-d-dunyā*} when it comes to you and the evil when it leaves you and the evil when you spend and its evil when you save.”

I went on saying that and my words reached the Shaykh and he said,

“— and from calamities — physical, mental and heart, each of them and all of them. If you have decreed any of them please cover me in the shroud of contentment, love, surrender and the reward of forgiveness and turning in repentance.”

## 15

“I saw the Messenger of Allāh, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and I said to him,

Yā Sīdī Rasūl Allāh. Request Allāh that I may become a mercy to all the worlds {*rahmatu-li-l-ʿālamīn*}.<sup>131</sup>

He said, “I am that, Oh ʿAlī and a walī is a mercy in all the worlds. {*rahmatu-fī-l-ʿālamīn*}”

## 16

“I saw as if there were a man who came to me saying, ‘The sultān is coming to see you, so say:

<sup>131</sup> Name bestowed on the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him by Allah {21:107}

اَللّٰهُمَّ  
 اِلْقِ عَلَيَّ مِنْ زَيْنَتِكَ وَ مَحَبَّتِكَ وَ كَرَامَتِكَ  
 وَ مِنْ نِعْوَتِ رَبُّوبِيَّتِكَ مَا يَبْهَرُ الْقُلُوبَ  
 وَ تَذِلُّ لَهُ النَّفُوسَ ♦ تَخْضَعُ لَهُ الرِّقَابُ  
 وَ تَبْرِقُ لَهُ الْاَبْصَارُ ♦ وَ تَتَبَدَّدُ لَهُ الْاَفْكَادُ  
 وَ يَصْغُرُ لَهُ كُلُّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ♦ وَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ كُلُّ ظَلُومٍ كَفَّارٍ  
 يَا اَللهُ ♦ يَا مَالِكُ ♦ يَا عَزِيزُ ♦ يَا جَبَّارُ  
 يَا اَللهُ ♦ يَا اَحَدُ ♦ يَا وَاَحِدُ ♦ يَا قَهَّارُ

## ALLAHUMMA

ʾILQI ʿALAYYA MIN ZIYANATIKA WA MAḤABATIKA WA KARAMĀTUKA  
 WA MIN NUʿŪTI RUBŪBIYYATIKA MĀ YABHARU-L-QULŪB  
 WA TADhILU LAHŪ-N-NUFŪSU ♦ TAKhḌAʿU LAHŪ-R-RAQĀB  
 WA TABĀRUQU-LAHŪ-L-ʾABġĀRU ♦ WA TATABADDADU LAHŪ-L-ʾAFĀKĀDU  
 WA YAṢ-GhURU LAHŪ KULLUM-MUTAKBBIRIN JABBĀRIN  
 WA YASJUDU LAHŪ KULLUN DhĀLŪMI KAFFĀRIN

YĀ ALLAH ♦ YĀ MĀLIK ♦ YĀ ʿAZĪZ ♦ YĀ JABBĀR  
 YĀ ALLAH ♦ YA ʾAḤAD ♦ YĀ WĀḤID ♦ YĀ QAHHĀR

Oh Allāh: Bestow upon me from Your Beauty and from Your Love and Your Dignity  
 and from the qualities of Your Lordship such that will dazzle the hearts  
 and before which the selfs will stand submissive and the spies will be subdued  
 a flash of lightening shall appear before the eyes and the thoughts of them are dispersed  
 each proud and haughty person shall be reduced  
 and every oppressive disbeliever shall bow down

Oh Allāh ♦ Oh High King ♦ Oh Mighty ♦ Oh Compeller  
 Oh Allāh ♦ Oh One ♦ Oh Unicity ♦ Oh Conqueror

## 17

“There came to me a high ranking representative of the government whilst I was in the Maghrib who said to me,  
 ‘I do not see that you devote yourself very much to religious works. That being so tell me how you have gained  
 such a position of eminence among the people so they think so highly of you?’

“I replied, ‘I have one good deed to my favour which was prescribed by Allāh to His Messenger and to which I  
 have clung.’

He asked, ‘What is that?’

I answered, ‘Withdrawal from you and from your world in accord with the Words of Allāh,

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

FAʿARID ʿAM-MAN TAWALLĀ ʿAN DĤIKRINA  
WA LAM YURĪD ʾILLA-L-ḤAYĀTA-D-DUNYĀ

*Withdraw from him who turns away from our Remembrance  
and desires only the life of the world.*

{53:29}

## 18

“He said, ‘Early in my beginning I pursued the science of alchemy and I made supplication to Allāh in this matter. I was told,

“‘Alchemy is in your urine; put it on what you want and it will become what you desire.’

“So I heated up an axe and made water upon it and it turned to gold. Then my reason came back to me and I said, ‘Oh Lord, I supplicated to You for a certain thing but I did not get it except by what is unclean {*najjas*} and the use of this is forbidden.’ Then I heard,

“‘Oh ʿAlī, the life of this world is filth and if you desire it you will not attain it except by filth.’

“I said, ‘Oh Lord, deliver me from it!’

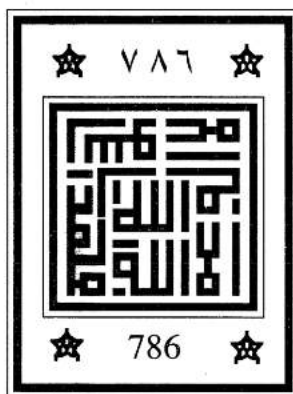
“I was then told, ‘Heat the axe and it will return to being iron.’ I did and it was.”

## 19

He said, “In a dream I saw my Guide standing beneath the Throne {*al-ʿarsh*}. Later I said to him,

‘Yā Sīdī. I saw you yesterday beneath the Throne.’

“He said, ‘You saw no one but your self, oh ʿAlī. If anyone is with Allāh without a *where* {*ayna*} how can he be seen? Whenever you inherit my station you will see me.’”



## REMEMBRANCE

Allāh, Exalted is He, endears remembrance {*adh-dhikr*} to the remembrancer {*adh-dhakir*} and calls the remembrancer to it in a most sublime and beautiful way.

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرُكُمْ

FADhKURŪNĪ ʾADhKURKUM

*So Remember Me; I will Remember you*  
{2:152}

Allāh, Glorified is He, calls for dhikr in different ways. He calls for it by way of an order {*al-'amr*} and He orders that the remembrancers, male and female {*dhākirīn wa dhākirāt*} should remember Him frequently,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا  
وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

YĀĀʾAYYUHĀ-L-LADDhĪNA ʾĀMANUDh-KURŪ-LLĀHU DhIKRAN KATHĪRA  
WA SABIḤUHU BUKRATAN WA ʾAṢĪLĀ

*Oh you who believe. Remember Allāh with abundant remembrance  
and praise Him in the early dawn and the late afternoon.*  
{33:41-42}

and the Glorified calls for dhikr in all situations in which human beings find themselves — saying,

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَ قُعُودًا وَ عَلَى جُنُوبِكُمْ

FAʾIDhA QADAYTUMU-Ṣ-ṢALĀTA:  
FADhKURŪ-LLĀHA QIYĀMAŅ WA QUʿUDAN WA ʿALA JUNŪBIKUM

*And when you have completed your worship  
remember Allāh standing, sitting or on your sides*  
{4:103p}

and He has made the signs of His creation means of Remembrance for those who steadfastly believe,

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

ʾINNA FĪ-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-ʾARḌ LAʾAYĀTIL-LI-L-MUʾMINĪN

*Truly in the heavens and the earth are signs for those who believe*  
{45:3}



إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَأَخْتَلَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولَى الْأَلْبَابِ  
الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ

INNA FĪ KhALQI-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-ʿARD  
WA-Kh-TALAFI-L-LAYLI WA-N-NAHĀRI LAʾAYĀTIL-LIʾULĪ-L-ʾALBĀB  
ALLADĥĪNA YADĥKURUNA-LLĀHA QIYĀMAÑ WA QUʿŪDAÑ WA ʿALA JUNUBIHIM

*Truly the creation of the heavens and the earth  
and the differences between the day and the night are signs for those possessed of wisdom  
Those who Remember Allāh standing, sitting or on their sides.  
{3:190-191p}*

Allāh also informs us that dhikr is a cure for worry, anxiety, and distress

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَ تَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ  
أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

ALLADĥĪNA ʾAMANU WA TAṬĀMAʾINNU QULŪBUHUM BI-DĥIKRI-LLĀH  
ʾALĀ BI-DĥIKRI-LLĀHI TAṬĀMAʾINNU-L-QULŪB

*Those who are faith full and bring their hearts to rest by the remembrance of Allāh  
For surely in the remembrance of Allāh are hearts made tranquil.  
{13:28}*

Contentment {ar-riḍā}, the conciliation of the self {hudūʿa-n-nafs}, serenity {as-sakīnah} and the tranquillity of the heart {ṭumaʾnīnata-l-qalb}: all of these arise from the Remembrance of Allāh, the Exalted, the Sublime.

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ  
وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا  
وَمِنْ ءَانَائِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ

FASBIR ʿALĀ MĀ YAQŪLŪNA  
WA SABIĥ BI-ḤAMDĪ RABBIKA QABLA ṬULŪʿI-Sh-ShAMS WA QABLA GhURŪBIHĀ  
WA MIN ʾĀNĀĀʾI-L-LAYLI FASABBIĥ  
WA ʾAṬĀRĀFA-N-NAHĀRI LAʿALLAKA TARḌĀ

*Be patient with what they say  
and proclaim the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its westering.  
and in the watches of the night and the two ends of the day that you may find contentment.  
{20:130}*

He orders patience and forbearance upon the remembrancers and abjures us not to lose sight of them in seeking the flashy glitter of worldly reward or by obeying those who have forgotten to remember.

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ  
بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ  
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا  
وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا  
وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا ۝

WA-Ṣ-BIR NAFSAKA MAʿA-L-LADHDHĪNA YADʿŪNA RABBAHUM  
BI-L-GHADĀTI WA-L-ʿASHIYYI YURĪDŪNA WAJHAHŪ:  
WA LĀ TAʿDU ʿANHUM TURĪDU ZĪNATA-L-HAYĀTI-D-DUNYA:  
WA LĀ TUṬIʿ MAN ʾAGHFALNĀ QALBAHŪ ʿAN DHĪKRINĀ  
WA-T-TABAʿA HAWĀHŪ WA KĀNA ʾAMRUHŪ FURUṬĀ ۝

*Restrain your self with those who call upon their Lord  
in the morning and the evening, seeking His Presence.  
Turn not your eyes away from them seeking the adornments of worldly existence.  
And do not obey the one whose heart we have made forgetful of Our Remembrance,  
who follows his own lust and whose orders exceed the limits. ۝*  
{18:28}

For in the Last and Final World {*al-ākhirah*} it will be those men and women who remember Allāh who will be the victors, as He has made clear in His saying,

وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُم مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

WA-DH-DHĀKIRĪNA-LLĀHA KATHĪRĀN WA-DH-DHĀKIRATI-  
ʾAʿADDA-LLĀHU LAHUM MAGHFIRĪRĪRĀTĀN WA AJĀRAN ʿADHDHĪMĀ

*And the men who remember Allāh abundantly and the women who remember.  
Allāh has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.*  
{33:35p}

The Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace of Allāh be upon him, was a lover of dhikr in its many differing forms {*makhtalafi-l-ʾasālib*} and in all circumstances. Sayyidah ʾĀʿishah, may Allāh be content with her, said, “He, blessings and peace of Allāh be upon him, remembered Allāh in all circumstances, and the word ‘circumstance’ {*ʾahyānih*} encompasses the meaning of both times and situations {*al-ʾawqāt wa tumni*}. He, may the blessings and peace of Allāh be upon him, remembered Allāh in the morning and the night and he made dhikr standing, sitting and on his side.”

He, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “Allāh says, ‘I am with My slave as long as he invokes Me and his lips move for invoking me.’” al-Bukhārī recorded it.

He, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “The one who remembers Allāh among the forgetful is like a green tree in the midst of dry straws.” Abū Nuʿaym recorded it.

In Ḥadīth Qudsī reported by ash-Shaykhāyn {al-Bukhārī and Muslim}, Allāh, Exalted is He, says on the tongue of the Prophet, blessings and peace upon him,

أَنَا-عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ حِينَ يَذْكُرُنِي،  
فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي،  
وَأِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَلَأٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُ،  
وَإِنْ تَرَبَّ إِلَيَّ شَبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا،  
وَإِنْ أَقْتَرَبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا أَقْتَرَبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا،  
وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً.

ʾANA ʿINDA DHANI ʿABĀDĪ BĪ WA ʾANA MAʿAHU HĪNA YADHKURUNĪ,  
FAʾIN DHAKARANĪ FĪ NAFSIHI DHAKARTUHU FĪ NAFSĪ,  
WA ʾIN DHAKARANĪ FĪ NAFSIHI MALʾAŅ DHAKARTUHU FĪ MAʾLĀN KHAYRIM MINH,  
WA ʾIN TARRABA ʾILLAY SHIBRAŅ TAQARRABTU ʾILAYHI DHIRĀʿĀ,  
WA ʾIN ʾAQRTABA ʾILLAY DHIRĀʿAN ʾAQRARABTU ʾILAYHI BĀʿĀ  
WA ʾIN ʾATĀNĪ YAMSHĪ ʾATAYTAHU HARWALAH

I am as My worshipper deems Me to be and I am with him when he remembers Me.  
And if he remembers Me in his self I Remember him in My Self.  
And if he remembers Me in a gathering I remember Him in a gathering better than his.  
And if he comes close to Me by a hand's breadth I come close by an arm's length.  
And if he comes closer to Me by an arm's length I come closer to him by both arms outstretched.  
And if he comes to me walking I come to him running.  
{recorded as correct {ṣaḥīḥ} by al-Bukhārī and Muslim}

ʾImām ʾAḥmad related that the Prophet, blessings and peace of Allāh be upon him, gave us guidance in saying:

“There is no act that the son of Adam performs which is more efficacious in saving him from the wrath of Allāh than the remembrance of Allāh.” al-Bukhārī recorded it.

He makes clear, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, reported on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās and recorded as correct {ṣaḥīḥ} by Abū Dāwūd an-Nisāʿī and al-Ḥakīm, that;

“The likeness of one who makes dhikr of his Lord and the one who does not remember is like the difference between the living and the dead. Just as one who remembers {adh-dhākir} achieves the Contentment of Allāh and His Reward {ṭhawābahu} in the Last and Final Life, so too does the dhākir gain benefit in this very life.”

They asked him, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, what act carried the greatest merit. He replied, “That you die with your tongue moist with the invocation of Allāh.” Ṭabarānī: *Kabīr*, 20.107

The Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, says, “He who finds his stronghold in the seeking of the forgiveness of Allāh {al-ʾistighfār} finds that Allāh makes for him an opening and a way out of every misery and hardship and grants him bounty from where he least expects it.”

SUPPLICATION

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ  
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾

WA ʾIDhĀ SAʾLAKA ʿIBĀDĪ ʿANNĪFAʾINNĪ QARĪBā;  
ʾUJĪBU DAʿWATA-D-DĀʿI ʾIDhĀ DAʿĀN;  
FALYASTAJĪBŪ LĪ WA-L-YUʿMINŪ BĪ LAʿALAHUM YARShUDŪN ﴿٢٨٦﴾

*And if My worshippers question you concerning Me — I am near —  
I answer the call of the caller when he calls out to Me  
so let them hear My Call and trust in me that they may be rightly guided.  
{2:186}*

Allāh, Glorified is He, has directed humanity to call out to Him in supplication and He has threatened those who, in their arrogance, are too proud to call upon Him. In a ḥadīth that ʾImām ʾAḥmad related, the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said:

« إِنَّ الدَّعَاءَ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ »

ʾINNA-D-DAʿĀʾA HUWA-L-ʿIBĀDAH  
“Truly supplication is worship.”

and then he, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, recited the following āyah from the Furqān:

أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۚ  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَاتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

ʾUDʿŪNĪ ʾASTAJIBĀ LAKUM:  
ʾINNA-L-LADhĪNA YASTAKBIRŪNA ʿAN ʿIBĀDĀTĪ  
SAYADKhULŪNA JAHANNAM DĀKIRĪN ﴿٤٠﴾

*Call me — I will answer you.  
Surely those who are too proud to worship Me shall enter the Fire utterly humiliated.  
{40:60}*

ʾAnnas, Allāh be pleased with him, reported that He, blessings and peace be upon him, said,

« الدُّعَا مُخُّ الْعِبَادَةِ »

AD-DUʿĀʾU MUhKhU-L-ʿIBĀDAH  
“Supplication is the brains of worship.”



Abi Hurayrah reported that the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said,

لَيْشَ شَيْءٌ أَكْرَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ

LAYSĀ SHĀYUN ḌAKRAMA ʿALĀ-LLĀHI MIN AD-DUʿĀ

“There is nothing more precious to Allāh than supplication.”

## SUPPLICATION CAN AVERT DESTINY!

Ibn ʿUmar, may Allāh be content with him, related that the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ فَتَحَ لَهُ بَابُ الدُّعَاءِ فَتَحَتْ لَهُ أَبْوَابُ الرَّحْمَةِ،  
وَمَا سُئِلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى شَيْئًا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ أَنْ يُسَالَ الْعَافِيَّةُ،  
وَإِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ يَنْفَعُ مِمَّا نَزَلَ وَمِمَّا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ،  
وَلَا يَرُدُّ الْقَضَاءَ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ، فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالدُّعَاءِ

“MAN FATIḤA LAHU BĀBU-D-DUʿĀ I FATIḤAT LAHU ḌABWĀBU-R-RAḤMAH,  
WA MA SUʾILA-LLĀHU TAʿALA SHĀYAN ḌAḤABBA ʾILAYHI  
MAN ḌAY-YASʾALA-L-ĀFIYYAH,

WA ʾINNA-D-DUʿĀ YANFAʿU MIMĀ NAZALA WA MIMĀ LAM YANZIL,  
WA LA YARUDDU-L-QAḌĀʾA ʾILLĀ-D-DUʿĀ, FAʿALAYKUM BI-D-DUʿĀ”

“The one who opens the Door of Supplication to him are open the Doors of Mercy.  
Allāh, the Exalted, was not asked for any thing more beloved by Him than health.  
Supplication is of benefit in that which has been sent down and that which has not been sent down.  
Nothing can revoke what is destined *except* supplication — so supplicate.”

Sayyidah ʿĀʾishah, may Allāh be content with her, related,

“The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, “Caution {*ḥadḥar*} cannot avert destiny {*al-qadar*}. Supplication {*ad-duʿā*} is of benefit in regards to what has been sent down and what has not been sent down. When trial or affliction {*al-balāʾ*} descends, supplication meets it and forestalls it until the Day of Judgment.” al-Ḥākim authenticated it.

at-Tirmidhī, Allāh be content with him, related on the authority of Salmān Fārisī, Allāh be content with him, that the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَرُدُّ الْقَضَاءَ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ، وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْعُمُرَ إِلَّا الْبِرُّ

LĀ YARDU-L-QAḌĀʾA ʾILLĀ-D-DUʿĀ, WA LĀ YAZIDU-L-ʿUMRI ʾILLĀ-L-BIR

“Nothing averts destiny except supplication and nothing extends the life but righteousness.”

## The acceptance of supplication has certain conditions

It must be proceeded by sincere repentance {*at-tawbah*}

The pursuit {*taharī*} of that which is licit {*al-hallāl*}

Ibn ʿAbbās related the following from al-Ḥāfiḍ Ibn Mardawih,

“This āyah was read to the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا

YĀʾAYYUHĀ-N-NĀSU KULŪ MIMMĀ FĪ-L-ʾARḌĪ ḤALLĀLAN ṬAYYIBĀ

*Oh you people, eat from the earth what is licit and good.*

{2:168p}

Saʿud bin ʿAbī Waqās said, “Oh Messenger of Allāh, call to Allāh that He many answer my supplication.”

‘Oh Saʿud. Eat of what is wholesome and your supplication will be accepted. By He Who holds the self of Muḥammad in His Hands, the one who puts what is unlawful {*al-ḥarām*} into his stomach will not have his supplication accepted for forty days and the worshipper {*al-ʿabd*} whose flesh grows from the forbidden or ill-gotten {*as-suḥt*} or usury {*ar-ribā*}: his flesh will be the first that the Fire shall eat.”

## The times for supplication

Whilst supplication is of benefit at any time, there are certain times and places which are preferable. The Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him said;

يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى سَمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا  
حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ، فَيَقُولُ:

YANZILUR-RABBUNĀ KULLA-L-LAYLATI ʾILA SAMĀʾI-D-DUNYĀ  
ḤĪNA YABĀQA ṬḤULATU-L-LAYLI-L-ʾAKḥIR — FALYAQŪL ..

“Our Lord descends every night to the heavens of the world in the last third of the night and says.”

مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَاسْتَجِبْ لَهُ؟ مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأَعْطِيهِ؟  
«مَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرْ لَهُ؟»

MAÑY YADUʿUNĪ FAʾSTAJIBU LAHU? MAÑY YASʾALUNĪ FAʾAʿṬIHU?  
MAÑY YASTAGḥFIRUNI FAʾGḥFIRLU LAHU

“Who calls to Me that I may answer? Who asks of Me that I may give?  
Who requests My forgiveness that I may forgive?”

And the Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, was asked as to which supplications were most certainly heard. He replied,

جَوْفَ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرُ، وَ دُبُرَ الصَّلَوَاتِ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ

JAWFA-L-LAYLU-L-ĀĀKHIRU WA DUBURA-Ş-ŞALAWATI-L-MAKTUBAH

“In the middle of the night or at its end and in the last part of the prescribed prayers.”

Muslim recorded as correct {ṣaḥīḥ} the saying of ʿAbī Hurayrah, may Allāh be content with them both, that the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said,

أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَ هُوَ سَاجِدٌ، فَأَكْثَرُوا مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ

ʾAQĀRABU MĀ YAKŪNU-L-IBADU MIR-RABBIHU WA HUWA SĀJIDUN  
FAʿAKṬHĀRŪ MIŪD-DUʿĀ

“The nearest the worshipper is to his Lord is in the prostration.”

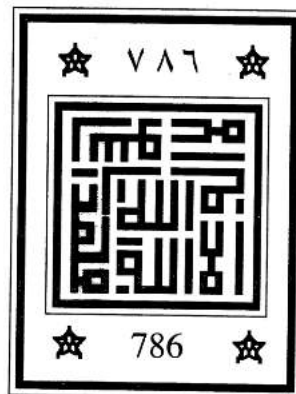
As to the places in which supplication is most readily heard, these are the pure, holy and blessed places, the best of which is Makkah the Blessed, and then after her, Madinah the Illuminated, and then al-Quds the Noble {Jerusalem}.

وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَّى مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا

WA LOW LĀ FADLU-LLĀHI ʿALAYKUM WA RAḤMATUHU  
MA ZAKĀ MIN ʾAḤADIN ʾABADĀ

*And were it not for the Grace of Allāh upon you and His Mercy, none of you would ever be pure.*

{24:21p}



## Dhikr & Du'ā' in the 'Aḥzāb of Shaykh 'Abū-l-Ḥasan

Shaykh 'Abū-l-Ḥasan, Allāh sanctify his secret and perfume his resting place, placed great importance on frequent and constant Remembrance and Supplication. His way, in most cases, was to mix dhikr with supplication, and what we have received from him in this form, both in his Orisons and Litanies {*'aḥzāb wa adhkar*}<sup>119</sup>, as well as sayings, is so vast that we can not fully deal with it all in this section. We will concern ourselves here with what Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh as-Sankandārī related in *Laṭā'if al-Minan* {*The Subtle Bestowals*} and Ibn Sabbagh related in *Durrati-l-Asrār* {*The Secret Pearls*} and Ibn 'Iyyad related in *al-Mufākhiri-l-'Aliyyah* {*The Glorious Traits of the Friends of Allāh*}, may Allāh sanctify their secret.

Ibn 'Iyyad says, "The Orisons of the Perfected People {*'ahli-l-kamāl*} are mixed with their states {*'aḥwāl*}, backed by their true knowledge {*'ilm*}, fortified with their inspiration {*ilhām*}, and accompanied by their blessed wonders {*karāmat*}."

Shaykh 'Abū-l-Ḥasan said with regard to The Orison of the Earth {*Ḥizbu-l-Barr*}<sup>120</sup>, "He who reads our Orison will have what we have and upon him will be what is upon us."

The Orisons and Litanies of our Shaykh, may Allāh sanctify his secret, contain beneficial knowledge {*'ifādati-l-'ilm*}, the refined manners of unicity {*'āādābi-t-tawḥīd*}, indications for the way {*ta'rifī-t-ṭariqah*}, the intimations of reality {*talwiḥi-l-ḥaqīqah*}, reminders of the sublimity of Allāh the Most High and His Majesty and Greatness, as well as reminders of the baseness {*ḥaqārah*} of the appetitive self and its degraded nature {*kḥissatiḥā*}, coupled with warnings about its deceptions {*kḥidā'*} and misleading enticements {*ghawāḥ*}. The Orisons contain clear descriptions of the nature of worldliness and worldly people and the ways both may be avoided. The Orisons contain reminders of one's transgressions and defects and the way to relieve one's self from them. The Orisons point out the characteristics of tawḥīd and sincerity and the necessity of adhering to the Divine Law {*ash-shar'*} and carrying out or fulfilling its demands. The Orisons are education in the form of directives and directives in the form of education. Whoever seeks knowledge {*al-'ilm*} in them will find knowledge and whoever seeks for deeds {*al-'amal*} will find their source {*'aynuh*}. Who seeks a spiritual state {*al-ḥal*} will find in them its secret seat. All that we mention has been attested to by both the élite {*al-kḥaṣṣ*} and the average {*al-'āmm*} seekers of Truth.

There is not anyone who hears them but that they are affected by them save that they be preoccupied with a weighty crisis or with worldly concerns and we beseech the help of Allāh in all such matters.

Shaykh 'Abū-l-Ḥasan says, advising those remembrancers {*adh-dhākirīn*} and supplicators {*ad-dā'in*} who hope that Allāh accepts {*qabūl*} their calls,

"If you want a response to your calls quicker than a flash then you must attain five things:

<sup>119</sup> See Volume One, {*Orisons*} pages 21-220 of the Arabic section and the Arabic section of this Volume.

<sup>120</sup> See Volume One, {*Orisons*} pages 37-82.



Submission to the Order	<i>al-amtithāli-l-ʿamr</i>
Avoidance of the reprehensible	<i>al-ajtinābi-li-n-nahīy</i>
Purification of the Secret	<i>taṭhīri-s-sirr</i>
Gathering of the Resolve	<i>jamʿi-l-himmah</i>
Absolute Need	<i>al-ʿidṭirār</i>

In accord with the saying of Allāh,

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَ يَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ  
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ خَلْفَاءَ الْأَرْضَ  
أَلَيْسَ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذْكُرُونَ

ʾĀMMANŸ-YUJĪBU-L-MUḌṬARRIʾIDhĀ DAʿĀHU WA YAKShĪFU  
WA YAJĀʿALAKUM KhĀLAFĀʾA-L-ʾARD:  
ʾĀʾILĀHUN MAʿA-LLĀH: QALĪLAM-MA TADhKKARŪN ❁

*He who answers the destitute when he calls and removes the evil  
and appoints you as representatives upon the earth.  
Is there a god with Allāh? Little indeed do you remember.*

{27:62}

The one who is deprived and bereft {*mahrūm*} is the one who calls to Allāh and his heart is occupied with other than Allāh. Avoid this by every means and if it is not possible for you to hold to five prerequisites then isolate {*kḥulwah*} yourself from people and recall, to the extent Allāh wills, your evil actions and characteristics with total scorn and profer unto Him what you know of the beauty of His Veil and say the following:

Duʿāʾ

يَا اللَّهُ يَا مَنَّانُ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا ذَا الْفَضْلِ

YĀ ALLĀHU YĀ MANNĀNU YĀ KARĪMU YĀ DhĀ-L-FADL

“Oh Allāh, The Dispenser, The Generous, Possessor of Abundance.

مَنْ لِهَذَا الْعَبْدِ الْعَاصِي غَيْرُكَ

MAL-LI-HADhĀ-L-ʾIBADI-L-ʾĀSĪ GhĀYRUK

Who does this erring slave have but You?

وَ قَدْ عَجَزَ عَنِ النَّهْوِضِ إِلَى مَرْضَاتِكَ

WA QADā 'AJIZA 'AN-N-NUHŪḌI 'ILĀ MARDĀTIK

This slave has been incapable of ascending to Your Pleasure,

وَ قَطَعَتْهُ الشَّهْوَةُ عَنِ الدَّخُولِ فِي طَاعَتِكَ

WA QATĀ'ATHU-Sh-ShAHWATU 'AÑD-DAKḥŪLI FĪ ṬĀ'ATIK

and his lust has prevented him from entering in Your Obedience.

لَمْ يَبْقَ لَهُ حَبْلٌ يَتَمَسَّكُ بِهِ سِوَى تَوْحِيدِكَ

LAM YABĀQA LAHU HABĀLU YATAMASAKU BIHI SUWĀ TAWḤĪDIK

There is no rope left for him to cling to other than Your Oneness.

وَ كَيْفَ يَجْتَرِيءُ عَلَى السُّؤَالِ مَنْ هُوَ مُعْرِضٌ عَنْكَ

WA KAYFA YAJĀTARĪ'U 'ALĀ-S-SU'ĀLI MAN HUWA MU'RIDUN 'ANK

How can one who is so far from You be honest in his calling?

أَمْ كَيْفَ لَا يَسْأَلُ مَنْ هُوَ مُحْتَاجٌ إِلَيْكَ

'AM KAYFA LĀ YASĀLU MAN HUWA MUḤTĀJUN 'ILAYK

Yet how can he not ask when he is so in need of You?

وَ قَدْ مَنَنْتَ عَلَى الْآنَ بِالسُّؤَالِ مِنْكَ

WA QADā MANANTA 'ALAYYA-L-ĀĀNA BI-S-SU'ĀLI MINK

When You have granted him the boon of asking You?

وَ جَعَلْتَ حَسْبِي الرَّجَاءَ فِيكَ

WA JA'ALTA ḤASBĪ-R-RAJĀ'A FĪK

And You have given him hope in You?

فَلَا تُرْدُنِي مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ يَا كَرِيمُ

FALĀ TURUDNĪ MIR-RAḤMATIKA YĀ KARĪM

So do not turn me away devoid of Your Mercy, Oh Generous.

وَقَدْ جَعَلْتَ لِأَسْمَائِكَ حُرْمَةً فَمِنْ دَعَاكَ بِهَا لَا يُشْرِكُ بِكَ شَيْئًا أَجَبْتَهُ

WA QADĀ JA'ALTA LI-'ASMĀ'IKA ḤURMATAN  
FIMAN DA'ĀKA BIHĀ LĀ YUSHRIKA BIKA SHĀYAN 'AJABĀTAH

You have sanctified Your Names.  
So whoever calls You — without associating any one with You — You will answer.

فَبِحُرْمَتِ أَسْمَائِكَ يَا اللَّهُ

FA-BI-ḤURMATI 'ASMĀ'IKA YĀ ALLĀH

So by the Sanctity of Your Names, Oh Allāh

يَا مَلِكُ يَا قُدُّوسُ يَا سَلَامُ يَا مُؤْمِنُ يَا مُهَيَّمُنُ يَا عَزِيزُ  
يَا جَبَّارُ يَا مُتَكَبِّرُ . يَا خَالِقُ يَا بَارِئُ يَا مُصَوِّرُ

YĀ MALIKU YĀ QUDŪSU YĀ SALĀMU YĀ MU'MINU YĀ MUHAYMINU YĀ 'AZĪZU  
YĀ JABBĀRU YĀ MUTAKBBIRU YĀ KHALĪQU YĀ BĀRI'U YĀ MUSAWWIR

Oh Sovereign, Oh Holy, Oh Peace, Oh Security, Oh Protector, Oh Invincible,  
Oh Omnipotent, Oh Most Great,  
Oh Creator of all that is, Oh Shaper from Nought, Oh Former of the Image

قِنِي مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ  
وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالشَّكِّ وَسُوءِ الظَّنِّ وَضُلْعِ الدِّينِ  
وَوُغْلَبَتِهِ وَقَهْرِ الرِّجَالِ

QINĪ MIN AL-HAMI WA-L-ḤAZANI WA-L-'AJĀZI WA-L-KASĪ  
WA JUBĀNI WA BUKḤLI-WA-Sh-ShAKI WA SŪ'I-DH-DHANNI WA ḌUL'I-D-DAYN  
WA GHĀLABATIHI WA QAHRI-R-RIJĀL

Protect me from distress and grief and incapacity and laziness and cowardliness  
and miserliness and suspicion and the pressures of debt  
and the beatings and subjugation of men.

فَإِنَّ لَكَ الْأَسْمَاءَ الْحُسْنَ  
وَقَدْ سَبَحَ لَكَ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

FA'INNA LAKA-L-'ASMĀ'U-L-ḤUSNA-  
WA QADĀ SABAHA LAKA MĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-'ARD  
WĀ 'ANTA-L-'AZĪZU-L-ḤAKĪM

Yours are the Beautiful Names,  
and every thing in the heavens and the earth praises You,  
and You are The Omnipotent, The All-Wise

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَسْأَلُكَ خَیْرَاتِ الدُّنْیَا وَ خَیْرَاتِ الدِّیْنِ

ALLĀHUMMA 'INNĪ 'AS'ALUKA KhAYRĀTI-D-DUNYĀ WA KhAYRATI-D-DIN

Oh Allāh, I ask you for the goodness of the worldly life and the goodness of the religious life.

خَیْرَاتِ الدُّنْیَا بِالْأَمْنِ وَالرَّفْقِ وَالصَّحَّةِ وَالْعَافِیَةِ  
خَیْرَاتِ الدِّیْنِ بِالطَّاعَةِ لَكَ وَالتَّوَكُّلِ عَلَیْكَ  
وَالرِّضَا بِقَضَائِكَ وَالشُّكْرَ عَلَیْ آلَائِكَ وَنَعَمِكَ  
« إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ »

KhAYRĀTI-D-DUNYĀ BI-L-'AMNI WA-R-RIFQI WA-Ş-ŞIḤATI WA-L-'ĀFIYAH  
KhAYRATI-D-DINI BI-Ṭ-ṬĀ'ATI LAKA WA-T-TAWAKKULI 'ALAYK  
WA-R-RIDĀ BI-QADĀ'IK WA-Sh-ShUKRI 'ALA ĀĀL'IKA WA NA'IMIK  
'INNAKA 'ALĀ KULLI ShAY'IN QADĪR

The good of the world in the form of security and bounty and health and well-being.  
The good of the religious life in the form of obedience to You and reliance upon you  
and contentment in what You have ordained and thankfulness for Your Generosity and Bounty.

*“Truly You have Power over all things.”*

{3:26}

The Shāykh, may Allāh sanctify his secret, said, “Do not let your dividend in the making of duʿā be simply the fulfillment of your wants and needs devoid of the joy of communication with your Beloved, lest you be from those who are veiled.”

Oh Allāh, Oh Friend, Oh Protector, Oh Wealthy, Oh Praiseworthy. I seek refuge with You from a world in which there is no portion pertaining to Your Self and any deed which follows in which there is a portion from other than You. I seek refuge with You from any movement which is removed from the practice {*sunnah*} of Your Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, or any involuntary act which does not lead to the inner knowledge {*maʿarifah*} of You. Keep my heart in Your Presence and cause me to dispense with my guarding it by Your Guarding it. You have Power over all things.”



In another<sup>121</sup> of his remembrances {*adhkār*} he said,

Oh Allāh,

O You who have given existence to that which exists through Your Existence.

Oh You Who controls the states of movement and rest.

I ask You by Your Glorious Name by which You bring Life to the dead.

By which you raise up in exaltation whom You Will and utterly abase whom You Will.

Make for me an opening and a way out of my assigned tasks.

Oh You who are The Supreme Hope.

Our Shaykh, Allāh sanctify his secret, said,

The Companions of the Messenger,

Blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,

Were distinguished by their actions.

As were those who followed them

{*at-tābi'in*}

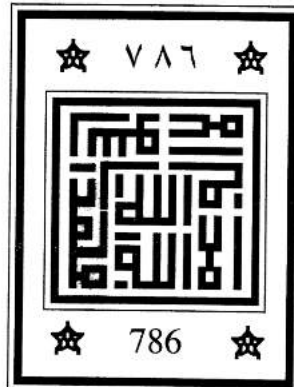
The people of our time are distinguished by mystical knowledge {*ma'rifah*}

And I have been made to impart to them

the Knowledge of Allāh,

*‘azza wa jalla*

Here we direct our readers to the Arabic section at the other end of this volume {pp 1-41} where we have transcribed, transliterated and translated a number of the *adhkār* of our Shaykh which were relayed here and there and which do not take the form of the Orisons or Litanies that are found in Volume One. Although these *adhkar* in the original book follow directly upon the few preceeding examples, which we have included to give the taste and the scent of his *adhkār*, we felt that in the English language edition it would be better to place these in a separate section, since they are extensive and since Arabic is written from right to left and it would be best if the pagination followed sequentially. We trust that this will not prove troublesome to the reader and we will now continue with the last chapter of Shaykh ‘Abdu-l-Ḥalīm’s work on our Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan.



<sup>121</sup>{*Durrat al-Asrar* } p182

## ADVICE of 'ABŪ-L-HASAN

Stick firmly to these good habits and you will have happiness in the two worlds.

- 1} Do not take friends {*waliyā*} from among the unbelievers {*al-kāfirīn*} and do not make enemies {*'aduwā*} from amongst the believers {*al-mu'minīn*}.
- 2} Make the provisions for your journey in this world {*ad-dunyā*} to be the fear of Allāh {*at-taqwā*} and consider yourself to be among the dead.
- 3} Bear witness to the Oneness {*al-waḥdāniyyah*} of Allāh and to the message of His Messenger.
- 4} Account your good deed even if it be small. — and say,

ءَامَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ وَ مَلٰئِكَتِهٖ وَ كُتُبِهٖ وَ رُسُوْلِهٖ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

'ĀMANTU BI-LLĀHI

WA MALĀĀ'IKATIHI WA KUTUBIHI WA RUSŪLIHI WA-L-YAWMI-L-'ĀKHĪRA

I believe in Allāh and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers and the Last Day

سَمِعْنَا وَ أَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَ إِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

SAMI'NĀ WA 'AṬA'NĀ GHĪFRĀNAKA RABBANĀ WA 'ILAYKA-L-MAṢĪR

*We hear and we obey. Forgive us, oh our Lord, and to You is the final return.*

{2:285p}

And to those who stick to these good habits, Allāh, Most High, will guarantee four things in the world:

Truth in Speech	Sincerity in Action
Provision like rain	Protection from evil

And Allāh, glory be to Him, will guarantee four things in the last world:

Massive Forgiveness	Affectionate Nearness
Entering the Sheltered Garden	Reaching the High Rank

If you yearn for truthfulness in your speech, then persevere in reading *Suratu-l-Qadr* {97} beginning:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

'INNĀĀ 'ANZALNĀHU FĪ LAYLATI-L-QADĀR

*Truly We sent it down on the Night of Power*

{97:1}

If you want provision {ar-rizq} like rain, then persevere in reading *Sūratu-l-Falaq* {113} beginning:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

QUL 'A'UDḥU BI-RABBI-L-FALAQā

Say: I take refuge in the Lord of the Crack of Dawn.  
{113:1}

If you want preservation from the evil of people, persevere in reading *Sūratu-n-Nās* {114} beginning:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

QUL 'A'UDḥU BI-RABBI-N-NĀS

Say: I take refuge in the Lord of the People.  
{114:1}

If you want to bring goodness {kḥayr} and bounty {rizq} and blessings {barakah},  
persevere in reading:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ هُوَ نِعَمَ الْمَوْلَى وَ نِعَمَ النَّصِيرِ

BISMILLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

AL-MALIKU-L-ḤAQQU-L-MUBĪN HUWA NI'MA-L-MAWLĪ WA NI'AM-N-NAṢĪR

In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Bestower of Mercy  
The Sovereign, The Clear Truth. He is the Blessed Protector and the Blessed Support

And persevere in the daily reading of *Sūratu Yā Sīn* {36} and *Sūratu-l-Wāqī'ah* {56}.



If you yearn that Allāh would make a way out for you from every distress and an opening from every hardship and that He would give you from where you know not, then confine your self to seeking forgiveness.  
{'istighfār}.



If you want to feel secure from what terrifies you, then say:

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ غَضَبِهِ وَ عِقَابِهِ  
وَ مِنْ شَرِّ عِبَادِهِ وَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَ إِنْ يَحْضُرُونَ

'A'UDḥU BI-KALIMATI-LLĀHI-T-TĀMMĀTI MIN ḠADIBAH WA 'IQĀBAHU  
WA MIN SHĀRRI 'IBĀDAHU WA MIN HAMIZĀTU-Sḥ-SḥAYĀṬĪNA WA IŅY-YAḤḌARŪNA

I take refuge in the perfect complete Words of Allāh from His Anger, His Punishment  
and from the evil of His Worshippers and from the sneering slander and presence of the ṣḥayāṭin.

If you yearn to know when the gates of heaven are open and prayers {*ad-du'ā'*} are answered, then bear witness at the time the caller calls and answer his call by saying the ḥadīth,

مَنْ نَزَلَ بِهِ كَرْبٌ أَوْ شِدَّةٌ فَلْيَجِبِ الْمُنَارِي

MAN NAZALA BIHI KARABU 'AW ṢhĀDATU FA-L-YAJIBA-L-MUNĀDĪ

"He upon who descends misery and calamity should respond to the caller."

And by 'the caller', Allāh means the one who calls us to prayer.



If you wish to be safe from misery, stress or fear, then say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ

إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ وَابْنُ عَبْدِكَ وَابْنُ أُمَّتِكَ،  
 نَاصِيَتِكَ بِيَدِكَ، وَ مَاضٍ فِي حُكْمِكَ، عَدْلٌ فِي قَضَاؤُكَ،  
 أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ سَمِيتُ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ،  
 أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ،  
 أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتُ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ،  
 أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمُ رَبِيعَ قَلْبِي، وَ نُورَ صَدْرِي،  
 جَلَاءَ حُزْنِي، وَ ذَهَابَ هَمِّي وَ غَمِّي

ALLĀHUMMA

'INNĪ 'ABĀDUKA WA-BĀ-NI 'ABĀDUKA WA-BĀ-NI 'UMMATIK  
 NĀṢIYATIKA BI-YADIK • WA MĀDĪ FIYYA ḤUKMIK • 'ADLUN FĪ QADĀ'UK  
 'AS'ALUKA BI-KULLI-S-MI SAMĪTU BIHI NAFSIK  
 'AW 'ANZALTAHU FĪ KITĀBIK • 'AW 'ALIMTAH 'AḤADAM-MIN KḥALQIK  
 'AW ASTA'ATHĪRTU BIHI FĪ 'ILMU-L-GḥAYBU 'INDAK  
 'AN TAJĀ'ALU-L-QUR'ĀNU-L-'ADḥĪM RABĪ'A QALBĪ WA NŪRI ṢADRĪ  
 WA JALĀ'I ḤUZNĪ • WA DḥAHĀBI HAMMĪ WA GḥAMMI

Oh Allāh.

Truly I am Your Slave and the child of Your Slave and the child of Your Community.  
 My forelock is in Your Hand • Your judgement for me is issued • Your decree is just.

I implore You by every Name that You have called Your Self

Or sent down in Your Book • Or taught any one of Your Creatures.

Or kept to Your Self in Your Unseen Knowledge.

Make the Sublime Qur'ān to be the springtime of my heart and the night of my breast.

The disperser of my sadness and the vanisher of my sorrow and grief.



If you want to feel at rest from a matter which is greatly disturbing you, then say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا  
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ  
وَكَبَّرَهُ تَكْبِيرًا

AL-ḤAMDU-LLILĀHI-L-LADHĪ LAM YATTTAKḤIDḤ WALADAN  
WA LAM YAKUL-LLĀHŪ SHARĪKUN FIL-MULKI WA LAM YAKUL-LLAHŪ  
WALIYYUM-MIN-DḤ-DḤULI — WA KABBIRHU TAKBĪRĀ

*Praise be to Allāh Who has not taken to Himself a son and Who has no partner in Sovereignty  
nor does He have, out of humility, a protecting friend.  
So magnify Him with repeated magnificats*

{17:111}

and if you want to be cured by Allāh from 99 diseases, the least of which is madness, then say:

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

LĀ ḤAWLA WA LĀ QUWWATA 'ILLĀ BI-LLĀHI-L-'ALIYYU-L-'ADḤĪM

*No might and no power except with Allāh The Most High, The Sublime.*

{18:39p}

If you wish to be benefited from whatever calamity besets you, then say:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

INNĀ LI-LLĀHI WA 'INNĀA 'ILAYHI RĀJI'UN

*Truly we belong to Allāh and truly to Him we return*

{2:156p}

If you want to be successful in submission and surrender, then give up inquisitive staring and curiosity

If you want to have a sufficiency of wisdom, then give up chattering speech {faḍūli-l-kalām}.

If you want to be successful in rectifying your own fault, leave off spying on the faults of others.

Part of hypocrisy {an-nifāq} is spying {jawsasah} on others,  
whilst entertaining good thoughts {hasanu-dḥ-dḥan} of others is a part of secure faith {al-'imān}.

If you want your distress to vanish and your debts to be paid, say in the morning and at night:

لَلّٰهُمَّ،  
 اِنِّىْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اَلْهَمِّ وَ اَلْحَزَنِ  
 وَ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اَلْجَبَنِ وَ اَلْبُكْلِ،  
 وَ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اَلْعَجْزِ وَ اَلْكَسْلِ،  
 وَ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَالِبَةِ الدِّينِ وَ قَهْرِ الرِّجَالِ

ALLĀHUMMA

'INNĪ 'A'ŪDHU BIK MINA-L-HAMMI WA-L-ḤAZN •  
 WA 'A'ŪDHU BIK MINA-L-JABĀNI WA-L-BUKL •  
 WA 'A'ŪDHU BIK MINA-L-'AJZI WA-L-KASL •  
 WA 'A'ŪDHU BIK MINA GHĀLIBATU-D-DAĪNU WA QA HARU-R-RIJĀL •

Oh Allāh

truly I take refuge with You from sadness and grief.  
 And I take refuge with You from helplessness and laziness.  
 And I take refuge with You from cowardice and stinginess.  
 And I take refuge with You from the defeat of debt and the tyranny of men.



If you want to be successful in attaining the sweetness of worship,  
 then leave off excessive concern with food and take up fasting.  
 Wake in the nights and offer the *tahajjud* <sup>122</sup> prayer.



If you want to be successful in attaining reverence, then leave off joking and laughing.  
 They kill reverence.



If you want to be successful in reaching the Garden, then leave off lusting after the world {*ad-dunyā*}.



If you want to be secure from all that is harmful, think the best of people.  
 And if you wish to reach the 'dwelling place' {*al-manzil*}, give up dependence {*al-'i'timād*} on people  
 and trust {*tawakkul*} in Allāh alone.



If you want to be successful in attaining to the fear {*al-khashiyyah*} of Allāh,  
 then give up fantasizing about the Essence {*adh-dhāt*} of Allāh, Most High,  
 that you may be saved from doubt {*ash-shak*} and hypocrisy {*an-nifāq*}.



<sup>122</sup> The supererogatory night vigil prayer said in the late watches of the night after having first slept.

If you wish your heart not to die, then say every day forty times:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

YĀ HAYYU YĀ QAYYUM • LĀ 'ILĀHA 'ILLA 'ANTA

*Oh Ever Living, Oh Self Subsisting, There is no deity save You.*

{18:39p}



If you wish to see the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,  
on the Day of Standing {yawmi-l-qiyāmah} and the Day of the Removal of the Veil {yawmi-l-ḥasrah},  
then read the following suwar abundantly:

*Sūratu-t-Takwīr* or The Overthrowing

which begins, after the basmallah,

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ

'IDḥĀ-Sḥ-SḥAMSU KUWWIRAT

*When the sun is overthrown*

{81:1}

*Sūratu-l-Infīṭār* or The Splitting  
which begins, after the basmallah,

أِذَا السَّمَاءُ أَنْفَطَرَتْ

'IDḥĀ-S-SAMĀ'U-N-FATĀRAT

*When the heaven is split apart*

{82:1}

*Sūratu-l-'Inshiqāq* or The Cleaving  
which begins, after the basmallah,

أِذَا السَّمَاءُ أَنْشَقَّتْ

'IDḥĀ-S-SAMĀ'U-N-SḥAQQAT

*When the heaven is cleft open*

{84:1}



If you want Allāh to enlighten your being {literally: your face}, persist in voluntary night prayers.



If you want to be saved from thirst on the Day of Resurrection, cling to the fast {aṣ-ṣāwm}.



If you wish to be saved from the torture of the grave {*adḥabu-l-qabr*},  
preserve your self from impurities {*an-najāsāt*}, abjure the forbidden {*al-muḥrimāt*} and reject lust.



If you want to be rich, then stick to frugality {*al-qanāʾah*}.



If you want to be among the best of people, then be useful {*nāfaʾā*} to the people.



If you wish to be counted among the devout {*ʾaʿbid*}, then catch hold of the words of the Prophet,  
blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,

“Who will learn from me these words and act upon them and teach others?”

Abū Hurayrah said, “I will, oh Messenger of Allāh.”

So he took his hand and counted to five, saying,

“Fear Allāh in regards to what is forbidden and you will be among the devout.”

“Be content with what Allāh has given you and you will be the richest of people.”

“Be good to your neighbor {*jārik*} and you will be a true believer {*muʾmin*}.”

“Love for the people what you love for your self and you will be a surrendered being {*muslimā*}.”

“Do not laugh too much, for laughter kills the heart.”



If you wish to be counted among the people of beneficence {*al-muḥsinīn*} and sincerity {*al-khālīṣīn*},  
worship Allāh as though you saw Him, knowing if you do not see him that He sees you.



If you yearn for your faith {*al-ʾimān*} to be complete, then refine your character {*kḥulq*}.



If you want Allāh to love you, then aid your Muslim brother in fulfilling his needs.



If you wish to be counted among the obedient {*al-muṭayʾīn*}, perform the worship {*ṣalah*} Allāh ordered.



If you want to meet Allāh on the Day of Judgment purified from all wrong actions {*adḥ-dḥanūb*},  
then wash {*fa-gh-tasil*} your self of all major impurities {*al-janābah*}  
and be sure to perform the Friday bath {*ghuslu-l-jumʾah*}.



If you yearn to be gathered {*taḥashir*} on the Day of Standing  
in the Light of Guidance {*fi nuru-l-huda*},  
— and wish to be saved from iniquity {*adḥ-dḥulāmāt*} —  
then don’t oppress {*tudḥalama*} any one of the creatures of Allāh.



If you want your mis-deeds to be diminished, then keep on asking for forgiveness {*al-ʾistighfār*}.



— ❁ —  
If you yearn to be among the most powerful of the people, then trust {*tawakkul*} in Allāh.

— ❁ —  
If you want Allāh to cover for you {*yastir Allāhu ‘alayk*},  
then cover the shameful faults {*‘uyūb*} of others.

— ❁ —  
If you want your mistakes {*khaṭāyak*} to be erased {*tamḥiy*},  
then ask for forgiveness abundantly and be humble {*khasha‘a*} and submissive {*khaḍa‘a*}  
and perform good deeds in private.

— ❁ —  
If you want to abundant rewards {*al-ḥasanātu-l-‘adhām*},  
then refine your character, be modest {*tūwāḍu‘*} and have patience {*aṣ-ṣabr*} in misfortune {*balwā*}.

— ❁ —  
If you want security from grave wrong doing {*as-sai‘ātu-l-‘adhām*},  
steer away from bad manners {*sū‘u-l-khalq*} and stinginess {*ash-shuḥḥ*}.

— ❁ —  
If you want to calm the wrath of the Omnipotent upon you, hide your charity and maintain family ties.

— ❁ —  
If you want Allāh to pay off your debts,  
say what the Prophet, blessings of Allah and peace be upon him, said,

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَكْفِنِيْ بِحَلَالِكَ عَنْ حَرَامِكَ وَاَغْنِنِيْ بِفَضْلِكَ عَمَّنْ سِوَاكَ

ALLĀHUMMA-K-FINĪ BI-HALĀLIKA ‘AN ḤARĀMIK  
WA-Gḥ-NINĪ BI-FADLIKA ‘AMAN SIWĀK

Oh Allāh, satisfy me by the permitted and not by the prohibited  
and enrich me by Your Bounty and by that of no one else.

— ❁ —  
If you want to be secure from people whose evil your fear, say;

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَجْعَلُكَ فِيْ نَحْوِهِمْ وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شُرُوْرِهِمْ

ALLĀHUMMA ‘INNĀ NAJĀ‘ALIKA FĪ NAḤURIHIM  
WA NA‘UDḥU BIK MIN SHURŪRIHIM

Oh Allāh, get them by their throats  
and I take refuge with You from their evil.

If you wish never to be hungry or thirsty, then persist in reading *Sūratu-l-Quraysh* {106}.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, the Mercy Full, the Mercy Bestowing*

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ

LI'ILĀFI QURAYSh

*For the protection of Quraysh*

إِلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

'ILĀFIHIM RIḤLATA-Sh-ShITĀĀ'I WA-Ṣ-ṢAYF

*Their safe passage in the journey of winter and summer*

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

FALYA'BUDŪ RABBA HĀDḥĀ-L-BAYT

*Thus should they worship the Lord of this House*

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُم مِّنْ جُوعٍ

ALLADḥĪ 'AṬĀ'AMAHUM MIN JŪ'IN

*Who has fed them in hunger*

وَأَمَّنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ

WA 'ĀMANAHUM MIN KḥAWF

*and secured them from fear*

{106:1-4}



If you want an abundance of good and ample provision, persist in reading  
*Sūratu-l-Inshirāḥ* {94}, The Expansion, and *Sūratu-l-Kāfirūn* {109}, The Disbelievers.



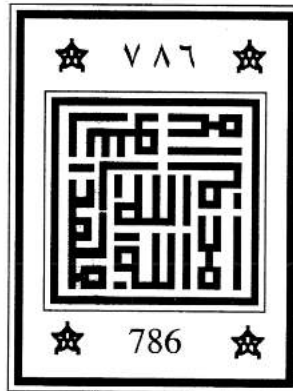
If you wish to be veiled from the people, then frequently say,

اَللّٰهُمَّ  
 اَسْتَرِنِيْ بِسِتْرِكَ الْجَمِيْلِ  
 الَّذِي سِتَرْتَ بِهِ نَفْكَ فَلَا عَيْنٌ تَرَاكَ

ALLĀHUMMA:

ʾISTIRANĪ BI-SATRIKA-L-JAMĪLA-L-  
 LADḥĪ SITRATA BIHI NAFKA FALA ʾAYNU TARĀK

Oh Allāh,  
 veil me with Your Veil of Beauty  
 with which You have covered Your Self so that no eye sees You.



## IN CONCLUSION & AN ADMISSION

When I first started writing this book I was immediately confronted with a dilemma. This dilemma centered around the subject of miraculous or supernatural works {*al-karāmāt*} that abound in the old books containing accounts of the life of Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan. They are so numerous that I could not really avoid writing about them. I asked myself, “Should I simply write them down and leave the responsibility to those who have related them? — and if I did simply copy them all down would I be doing a favour to Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan or would I be doing him a dis-service?”

In our time many ‘educated and cultured’ people {*al-muthaqqafīn*} dislike even the mention of these supernatural occurrences, these *karāmāt*. Exaggerations and immoderation. There is no doubt that the followers of any ‘*walī*’, whoever he or she might be, like to magnify and glorify the image of the *walī* so they therefore collect and relate as many accounts of *karāmāt* as they like. Whilst this may create a favourable response with some readers it may have the opposite effect on other readers.

There are those who begin by denying the *karāmāt* of the *awliyāʾ* and wind up dismissing the miracles {*al-muʿajazāt*} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, which are recounted in the true sunnah and other authentic {*ṣaḥīh*} information recorded by the collectors of *hadīth*. They have taken the position that they will satisfy themselves only by that which appears in the Qurʾān and reject anything that appears in any other place or is derived from any other source.

The very spirit of ‘modern times’ seems to call for the denial of *karāmāt* and discredits explicitly and implicitly anyone who attributes *karāmāt* to any *walī*.

On which side do I come down?

In spite of the existence of this ‘problem’ {*al-mishkilah*} which so clearly faces me I have not hesitated to begin this book, after my introduction, by recounting one of the *karāmāt* of Shaykh ʾAbū-l-Ḥasan. It is the one recounted by ʾAbū-l-ʿAbbās, may Allāh be content with him, and I do not have the least doubt as to its authenticity nor have I ever questioned the truthfulness of its communication. Indeed when I recount various *karāmāt* here and there I never feel the least qualm in my conscience. Neither have I gone back or retreated in my feelings nor have I found it distasteful to my sensibilities. Indeed I have not stated all of the *karāmāt* or even the majority but have chosen those I felt were relative to the subject matter with which I was dealing

Why is it that I have found no embarrassment {*ḥarājan*} in relating *karāmāt* in this book of mine?

Why?

For the following reasons:

① The Qurʾān speaks to us in a very clear manner about miracles {*al-muʿajazāt*} granted by Allāh to His Prophets and Messengers, upon all of whom be His blessings and peace. It also speaks of the *karāmāt* accorded to His *awliyāʾ* and His chosen ones {*ʾaṣfiyāʾ*}.

Isn’t it related within the Qurʾān how ‘Isā {Jesus}, peace be upon him, could form the likeness of a bird from clay and then blow upon it and it would become a living bird by the permission of Allāh? and did he not heal the blind and the lepers and raise the very dead by the permission of Allāh? {3:49}

Is it not related in Qur'ān how Mūsā {Moses}, peace be upon him, threw his staff and it became a gliding serpent that devoured the illusory snakes of the magicians of *Fir'awn* {Pharaoh}; and that when Mūsā, peace be upon him, withdrew his hand which had been disabled it came forth whole from his garments? {7:107-117 & 26:32-51}

Did not Sayyidatnā Maryam {Mary}, mother of 'Isā, peace be upon them, become pregnant by the Holy Spirit {*ar-rūh*} without the agency of a human father but by the Command of Allāh? {3:45-47 & 19:16-26 & 21:91} And is it not related that when Zakariyyā, peace be upon him, entered the sanctuary {*al-mihrāb*} where Maryam kept vigil, he found she had been provided with food?

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا  
قَالَ يَمْرُومُ أَنِّي لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

KULLAMĀ DAKĤALA 'ALAYHA ZAKARIYYĀ-L-MIHRĀB WAJIDA 'INDAHA RIZQĀ:  
QĀLĀ YĀ-MARYAMU 'ANNĀ LAKA HĀDĤĀ: QĀLAT HUWA MIN 'INDI-LLĀH:  
'INNA-LLĀHA YARZUQU MA'NY-YASHĤĀĀ'U BI-GĤAYRI ĤISĀB

*Whenever Zakariyyā entered into the sanctuary where she was, he found there was with her food.  
He said, "Oh Maryam, where is this from?" She said, "It is from Allāh.  
Truly Allāh provides without stint as He wills."*

{3:37}

② What we call the 'Laws of Nature' {*qawāninu-t-tabī'ah*} are in reality the commonly recurring 'habits of nature' {*ādātu-t-tabī'ah*}. Breaches or breaks {*kḥaraqā*} in those commonly recurring habits are not impossible, as neither the 'habits' nor the 'laws' are barriers to the One who created 'Nature' or 'nature'.

③ Those beings who manifest mu'ajazāt or karāmāt never attribute these breaches or tears in the fabric of time and space to themselves. Rather they attribute them to The Generous Bestower {*al-mutafaḍḍilu-l-wahāb*} or the Lord of Power {*ṣāḥibu-l-qadirah wa-l-qahar*}. That is to say that they attribute these mu'ajazāt or karāmāt to the 'One' who has power over all things.

④ It has been noted throughout the ages that those who dis-believe in the miraculous are characterized by severe and harsh feelings as well as what might be termed a lack of heart.

In fact their heads are cut off from their hearts and their hearts are not connected to their heads.

They are people who have access only to their physical brain and are kept alive only by their physical heart. They have been deprived, and deprive themselves, of refined consciousness {*riqatu-l-shu'ur*}, pure insight {*ṣafā'u-l-baṣīrah*} and angelic spirit {*mala'ikiyyatu-r-ruḥi*}. They are usually 'atheists' {*al-mulāḥidah*} or people who have not yet tasted real and certain faith {*al-'imān*} or people whose faith is weak.

⑤ The majority of Muslims throughout the ages, as well as their most illustrious leaders in knowledge {*al-'ilm*} and religion {*ad-dīn*}, have always accepted the evidence of karāmāt.

For these general reasons I have found no restrictions or embarrassment {*ṭiḥiraj*} in recording some of the karāmāt of Shāykh Abū-l-Ḥasan. Beyond these general reasons there are some special personal reasons which confront this whole question face-to-face.



I would say without false pride that I have never been one to fall prey to illusions {*al-wahām*} or spectral chimera {*al-kḥayalāt*}. Allāh has always protected me from that. Thus when I speak about ‘personal reasons’ I add to them an appeal that Allāh will use them to guide some of those who are not totally devoid of goodness of heart, and that the spirit of the personal reasons will lead people to the truth.

Sometime ago I was severely tested {*ʿibtīlānī*} by Allāh by something very oppressive {*shaqqa*} both to my self and those close to me. This test lasted for a very long period during which we most earnestly beseeched Allāh to lift it from us. One day a man from amongst the *ṣāliḥīn*<sup>123</sup>, who knew about my trials, came to visit me. He gave me a piece of paper on which was written a certain form {*ṣaugh*} of benediction on the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. He said, “Recite this benediction and immerse {*ʿistighāriq*} yourself in it. Return to it again and again by day and by night in the hope that Allāh will make it a cause to let this hardship pass.” The benediction went like this:

### An Invocation of Blessings on the Prophet

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ صَلَاةَ جَلَالٍ وَسَلِّمْ سَلَامَ جَمَالٍ  
عَلٰى حَضْرَةِ حَبِيْبِكَ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَ اَغْشِهٖ اَللّٰهُمَّ بِنُورِكَ  
كَمَا غَشِيَتْهُ سَحَابَةُ التَّجَلِّيَّاتِ فَنْظَرَ اِلٰى وَجْهِكَ الْكَرِيْمِ  
وَ بِحَقِيْقَةِ حَقَائِقِ كَلِمَ مَوْلَاهُ الْعَظِيْمِ الَّذِيْ اَعَادَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ سُوْءٍ

ALLĀHUMMA ṢALLI ṢALĀṬA JALĀLĪN WA SALLIM SALĀMA JAMĀLIN  
‘ALĀ ḤAḌṢRATI ḤABĪBIKA SAYYĪDINĀ MUḤAMMAD -  
WA-Gḥ-SḥĀHU ALLĀHUMMA BI-NŪRIKA  
KAMĀ GḥASHĪYATHU SAḤĀBATU-T-TAJALLIYĀTI  
FANADḥIRA ʿILĀ WAJHIKA-L-KARĪM  
WA BI-ḤAQĪQATI ḤAQĀʿIQI KALIMA MAWLAHI-L-‘ADḥĪMI  
ALLADḥĪ ʿA‘ĀDATU MIN KULLI SŪʿ

Oh Allāh bless with a benediction of sublimity and greet with a salutation of beauty  
the presence of Your Beloved, our liege-lord, Muḥammad  
Wrap him, Oh Allāh, in Your Light  
as You wrapt him in the clouds of theophany  
so that he gazed upon Your Noble Face.  
as he was wrapt in the Reality of the Realities of His Sublime Protector  
Who guarded him from all evil.

<sup>123</sup> A particularly difficult word to translate into English. The root is *ṣalaha* which means to be good, right, proper, in order, righteous, pious, godly. It also carries connotations of reconciliation, peacemaking. In its usage as a term describing a specific group of people i.e., *aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*, it carries all of those connotations and a bit more which have to do with a general and all-around soundness or goodness of heart, mind, spirit and body. A genuinely ‘whole’ and truly good human being with a high degree of what might be termed ‘God consciousness’.

اَللّٰهُمَّ فَرِّجْ كَرْبِيْ كَمَا وَ عَدْتَ  
 اَمِّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ اِذَا دَعَا وَ يَكْشِفُ السُّوْءَ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَ صَحْبِهٖ  
 . اٰمِيْنَ .

ALLĀHUMMA FARJA KARBĪ KĀMĀ WA‘ADT  
 ‘AMMAN ‘YUJĪBU-L-MUḌTARRA IDĤA DA‘AHU WA YAKSHĪFU-SŪŪ’  
 WA ‘ALĀ ĀĀLIHI WA SAḤBIH  
 — ĀĀMĪN —

Oh Allāh remove my hardship as You have promised.  
*He who answers the call of the destitute when he calls out and removes the evil*  
 {27:62}  
 and upon his family and companions  
 — peace —

When I said this Invocation I was sitting alone in one room in my house after the Night Prayer {*ṣalātu-l-‘ishā’*}. The lights were on in the room and I held the paper in my hand reciting from it over and over and immersed in the du‘ā when suddenly I saw that the letters written on the paper were fashioned by sparkling light {*tataḥḥal‘a nūrān*} even though the lights in the room were lit.

I did not believe my eyes and closed them several times and re-opened them and each time the letters of the words were luminous and shining of themselves. I put the paper down in front of me and gently massaged my eyes but when I opened them again the letters were still shining — streaming with light.

I thanked Allāh with the knowledge that the Gates of Mercy {*abwābu-r-raḥmah*} were open and that the light was a sign, an indication. In truth Allāh relieved me of the hardship soon after and I rested in peace with the help of this blessed invocation.

Another example of a breach or break {*kharq*} in the commonly recurring “habits of nature” {*ādātu-t-ṭabī‘ah*} which I have personally witnessed is this:

One day I was sitting as usual in my study. My head was bent down. When I raised my head to look up I saw in front of me a man. I gazed upon him with out any sense of fear or horror. He was tall and thin and of a taweny {*‘asmār*} complexion. On his head was a shawl {*al-ghutra*} like that worn by the people of the al-ḥijāz and he was dressed all in white. He was leaning slightly forward. I scrutinized him in his entirety; both form and detail. He did not speak to me nor did I speak to him.

I gazed upon him for some time whilst he himself continued to look steadily at me. As I looked on he gradually became translucent {*shafīf*} until he finally he became totally transparent and disappeared without ever once shifting his pose or moving his position {*yatakhḥarika min mawḍi‘ahu*}.

This I witnessed my self.

Is this not a breach or break {*kharq*} in the commonly recurring ‘habits of nature’ {*ādātu-t-ṭabī‘ah*}?

Those who do believe that the ‘normal’ can be cleft or cracked, that there are not tears or rents in the fabric of time and space, deny {*yankara*} the karāmāt of the Friends {*awliyā’*} of Allāh, deny that which has been authenticated by human experience from its beginning, deny that which has been authenticated in the Qur’ān,

deny the consensus of the Muslim community {*al-ummah*} and deny the reality which I have witnessed with my own eyes.

All of this has led me to relate *some* of the karāmāt of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan beginning with the one mentioned immediately after the introduction that was witnessed by his murīd, Shaykh ʾAbū Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb, as well as the karāmah at the spring of Humaythirah witnessed by his successor, the great Qutb, Shaykh ʾAbū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursi, may Allāh sanctify thier secret and perfume their resting places, and attested to by all who have tasted the water from that spring.

Before ending this book I would like to make another thing clear to the reader.

I have not written anything about the shuyūkh of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan beyond mentioning something about his spiritual director, the great walī, Shaykh ʿabdu-s-Salām Ibn Maṣṣish, Allāh be pleased with him, and I have purposely written nothing at all about the milieu or the environment {*wasatī*} of our Shaykh. My decision not to do this has a specific purpose and it stems from my deeply held viewpoint on this subject.

I believe that those who write about ṣūfism from the perspective of milieu, environment, teachers, spiritual directors in order to 'prove' that the ṣūfī was influenced by this or that or was influenced by so and so or that his viewpoint is the result of such and such in the environment is wrong. I believe that those who think that the ṣūfī is a mirror on which the image of his teachers or his society is automatically reflected is wrong. Such people are those who would dissect the ṣūfī with an eye to attributing everything to some material influence outside the ṣūfī himself or herself.

A ṣūfī is not a ṣūfī by sheer dint of reading or study or research, even if his or her reading is from the source materials of ṣūfism, for even if he or she may have studied those source materials in depth and be able to easily differentiate between the true and the false, distinguish between the old and the new, that person could still be far from ṣūfism and not really be a ṣūfī in truth {*muḥaqqiq*}, which is to say, one who possesses True Knowledge of Reality.

al-ʾImām Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, may Allāh be pleased with him, besides being an outstanding ʿalim, had studied in great depth the writings of the true ṣūfīs {*aṣ-ṣūfiyatu-l-muḥaqqiqīn*} including the works of al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, Abī Ṭālib al-Makkī, al-Junayd, aṣh-Shiblī and others, and yet, as he himself confessed, that did not make him a ṣūfī. Thus the reading of ṣūfī literature does not constitute a sure ladder to holiness and sanctity.

Ibn Sīnā studied ṣūfism from original source texts and materials. Moreover he mingled with ṣūfīs and wrote chapters in his books about ṣūfism, including a chapter which he felt crowned his work. Yet he never became a ṣūfī and all of his studies and writing did not qualify him to become a ṣūfī.

A ṣūfī can be someone who is completely illiterate and has never read a single book, such as the Berber Shaykh, ʾAbū Yaʿza Yallanūr ad-Dukkālī, the trainer of Shaykh ʾAbū Madyan al-Ghawth.

So all the talk about sources, environment, instructors, imitation and influences in the field of ṣūfism is a structure built on a false foundation. Any writer who follows such a course will be leading readers in a false direction and will be building on shaky foundations. Foundations which are refuted by the lives of such as ʾAbū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Khawwāṣ and others like them.

The orientalist {*al-mustashriqīn*} took that road. They tried to the utmost to relate every aspect of thought in the field of ṣūfism to a foreign point of origin {*maṣḍar ʾajnabī*}. They sought to find a 'link' between the tradition of ʾIslāmīc mysticism {*taṣawwuf*} and the ideas of those who had come before in time {*sābiqat mina-z-zamn*}. The orientalist lead themselves astray and lead their readers astray and after a century and a half they have not been able to reach a clear conclusion as to from whence they imagine the roots of ṣawwuf stem. On the

contrary they have lost face. They have advocated a position one day only to refute it the following day and have laboured hard to justify their contradicting viewpoints.

The orientalist Thölluck declared that taṣawwuf is based on old Persian mysticism, but later he put this viewpoint aside and declared that it is based on ʿIslāmīc principles. The orientalist Nicholson said that taṣawwuf had its roots in Platonic thought. Later he recanted and confessed that it was ʿIslāmīc in essence. In the end the orientalists wound up rebutting their own thesis which advocates that ṣūfism is somehow a 'foreign' product derived from earlier systems of thought, and that ṣūfīs themselves are a product of these foreign influences, as can be seen in the closing discussion<sup>124</sup> by Louis Massignon, perhaps the most eminent orientalist of the 20th Century, on the sources of al-Hallāj's teaching.

"In closing I must respond to a basic objection. Why did I not attempt to explain the originality of such a physiognomy by bringing to light certain incidents from his biography, by introducing, relative to the formation of his doctrine, certain civilizing influences foreign to Islam? An *Iranian* influence, for example, since Hallāj, as the son of a converted Mazdean, accepted invitation to visit Mazdeans; or a *Hellenistic* influence because he had studied the technical lexicon of the philosophers and gnostics; or Hindu, since he had supposedly gone to seek instruction from Indian idolaters; or *Syro-Chaldean*, because he had lived near a Christian settlement in Jerusalem and a Madean community in Waṣīt.

"It would undoubtedly be easy to construct lists of items like this, portraying Hallāj variously as a Persian nationalist conspirator, a Qarmathian Hermetist, a Hindu yogi, or an unavowed Christian, just as he was accused, at different times during his lifetime, of being a Sunnite, a Muʿtazilite, or an Imāmīte. The thoughtful reader will realize why common sense advised against such mental exercises, which, though certainly ingenious, are nevertheless sterile.

"We have shown elsewhere how the first Muslim mystics found their personal vocations at the very heart of Islam in a fervent, experimental meditation on the scriptural material contained in the Qurʾān. Hallāj was no exception to this rule."

In any case the orientalists have gone on discussing an imaginary problem, i.e., the source of taṣawwuf or ṣūfism, and they are still living and working in their differences and contradictions.

Some orientals<sup>125</sup> took the same path as the orientalists in talking about the source of ṣūfism. As the orientalists contradicted themselves so too did the orientals. Differences and contradictions will still remain because what they are discussing is cultural {*ṭhaqāfah*} influences as though taṣawwuf was the fruit of culturally acquired {*kasb*} knowledge. Taṣawwuf on the contrary is not the fruit of acquired knowledge nor is acquired knowledge the means of taṣawwuf, for the means of taṣawwuf is action {*al-ʿamal*} and the path {*aṭ-ṭarīq*} to Allāh {*salūk*} which, among other things, is behaviour {*ʾakhlāq*}, conduct {*taṣarraṭ*}, manners {*ʾādab*}, and spiritual etiquette {*al-mujāmalatu-r-ruḥīy*}.

Original knowledge or gnosis {*al-maʿrifatu-n-nāshīʿah*} arises from action and salūk which yields spiritual inspiration {*ʾilhām*} and spiritual insight {*kashf*}. It is the reflection of the Holy Sphere on the unveiled vision {*al-baṣīratu-l-jalwah*} so that one tastes {*fa-tadhawkahu*} and perceives {*ʾuḥiss*} instantaneously by and through direct inspiration and spiritual insight.

This being so, and it has been attested as being true over the course of a milenium and more, how then can taṣawwuf be attributed to Platonic or Persian or Hindu or any other mode or system of thought?

<sup>124</sup> *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Manṣūr Hallāj* Paris, 1922 translated from the French by Herbert Mason as *The Passion of al-Hallāj*, Volume 3, *The Teaching of al-Hallāj*, Bollingen Series XCVIII, Princeton University Press, USA, 1982

<sup>125</sup> Editor's Footnote: Such as Idries Shah, Vilayat Khan, Reschad Field, Murat Yagan and their like.



Thus the orientalist marked out a false path; orientals imitated them and people find themselves still talking about what the orientalist called 'the sources of ʿIslāmīc Ṣūfism'. This illusion {*wahm*} was decked out in seemingly serious and 'scholarly' attire which led in turn to further twists {*jadl*} in the arguments and discussions. These will persist until the basic mis-understanding is corrected.

This correction can only be achieved by eliminating the illusion that rises from the consideration of what may or may not be 'the sources of Ṣūfism'.

Because of all of this I have *not* written anything about the 'sources' of Ṣhaykh ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan. If I mention his ṣhaykh, Sīdī ʿabdu-s-Salām ibn Maṣṣish, I do so only in the context of his function as a spiritual director {*al-muwajjih*} and as a director only, for the director is neither the One who Reveals {*al-muwahhy*} nor is he the One who Inspires {*al-mulhim*}. The director is ultimately neither the Uplifter {*tarq*} nor is he the Transparent Intuition {*tashaf*} that enables the ṣūfī to receive the Truth {*al-ḥaqq*}. It is not he who is the Secret {*sirr*} that beomes the brilliant mirror in the heart of the seeker nor is the director himself the reflection {*naʿakas*} of the Cosmic Sphere in that mirror of the heart which causes the ṣūfī to feel, to see and to taste. Nor yet is the director the Intuitive Self-Evident Axiom which, when encountered in the Spirit {*ar-rūh*}, causes the seeker to immediately catch hold [of the Truth] of the full effulgence of Being.

I have mentioned Sīdī ʿabdu-s-Salām ibn Maṣṣish as a director because the traveller {*sālik*} on the path to Allāh *must* have a director. He must have a ṣhaykh; he must have someone to guide him {*yarshadaḥu*} on the Way to Allāh..

The well-known French metaphysician, Rene Guenon,<sup>126</sup> writes,

"In taṣawwuf it is necessary that there be an openly declared unconditional contract {*sharaṭu jawhari*} with the 'Spiritual Influence' {*at-taṭṭhiru-r-rūhīy*} who is the channel for The Blessing {*al-barakah*}, which is not realized other than through the agency of a 'Ṣhaykh'. From this there follows that there are 'Paths' {*aṭ-ṭuruq*} and Spiritual Links in a Chain {*as-silsilah*}. The Silsilah is the transmission or the conveyance {*tanaqala*} of the Blessing {*al-barakah*} from the Ṣhaykh to the Murīd."

Along the Way the Seeker may become the Sought, the Student become the Master, The Murīd become the Ṣhaykh and in turn the Bestowal of Blessing {*barakah*} may be conveyed or transmitted along the Chain.

The Professor {*al-ʿustādh*} Rene Guenon said concerning al-barakah that it is the 'Secret' {*as-sirr*}, which is transmitted from the ṣhaykh to the murīd at the time when the hand of the murīd is clasped in the hand of the ṣhaykh upon the occasion of the murīd entering into the sacred Covenant {*al-ʿahd*}<sup>127</sup> in which the murīd enters into the Way of Straightness<sup>128</sup> {*al-ʿistiḳāma*}."

If Professor Guenon sees the necessity of the Ṣhaykh on the level of the the Bestowal of the Blessing and the transmission of the 'Secret', then the ʿImām ar-Razī sees the necessity of the Ṣhaykh in yet another light.

<sup>126</sup>who later in life moved to Egypt, accepted ʿIslām and lived in Cairo as a Muslim where he was accepted as a ṣūfī ṣhaykh.

Dr.AHM wrote a chapter on him in the compiled edition of the Madrassah aṣḤ-ṢḤādhḥuliyah.

<sup>127</sup>*al-ʿahd* is a recapitulation in time and space of both the covenant made in pre-existence on the day of 'alastu bi-rabbikum' {"Am I not your Lord?"} {7:172} and the covenant made at the time when the early Muslims entered the Oath of Allegiance with the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, outside of Makkah al-Mukarramah in the village of Hudaybiyah {48:10}. As such the ʿahd is the renewal of the covenant outside of time and space between the individual soul and its Lord, and the renewal in time and space of the oath of fealty to the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

<sup>128</sup>*al-ʿistiḳāma* = straightness; sincerity, unrightness, rectitude, integrity, probity, honesty; rightness, soundness, correctness, dignity, steadfastness, unshakability



“Only he who has travelled the road {*aṭ-ṭarīq*} knows its stages {*marḥalaha*}, its stations {*manāzilaha*}, and the ascents to its convoluted turns {*matlaffaha*} and ruinous risks {*ma‘āṭabiha*}. This makes it possible to guide others to the straight and correct path {*sawā‘i-s-sabīl*} and inform them of the details.”

How long does the task of the shaykh continue?

It continues until he connects {*yartabiṭ*} the traveller to the Heavens {*as-samā‘*} — until the traveller is illuminated {*yashraq*} by the Cosmic Sphere {*al-ma‘a-l-‘alī*} — until the traveller dwells in the Spiritual Realms {*al-majālatu-r-ruḥiyyah*}.

For this reason Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan’s answer, may Allāh sanctify his secret, when asked who was his shaykh was both logical and natural. He said,

“At first it was Sīdī ‘abdu-s-Salām Ibn Mashīsh. Now I drink from ten seas. Five of them are heavenly and five of them are earthly. The heavenly seas from which I drink are: Jibrīl and Mikā‘il and ‘Isrāfīl and ‘Azrā‘il and ar-Rūḥ. The earthly seas from which I drink are Abū Bakr and ‘Umar and ‘Uṭhmān and ‘Alī, and the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon them all.”

This does not mean that the murīd will necessarily leave his shaykh. It does mean that when the shaykh has seen by the Light of Allāh {*bi-nūri-llāh*} that his student has ‘cut through’ the Way {*qad qaṭa‘-ṭarīq*} and by so doing has become capable of leading and guiding other travellers {*as-sālikīn*} on the Straight Way to Allāh, he gives his student permission {*‘idhn*} to guide {*bi-‘irshād*} others. He blesses his steps {*yabārik khaṭawātahu*} in the calling to Allāh.

In this way a new light illuminates the world; a new spiritual star shines forth; people are made blissful and are assisted on the Way to Allāh. Thus the spiritual tradition {*at-turāṭha-r-ruḥīy*} is enriched by a new radiance in close contact with Allāh.

There is another point that I would like to discuss before ending this chapter.

By observing the life of Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan it is possible to find corrections for many of the misunderstandings that exist concerning ṭaṣawwuf which are circulated by materialists {*al-māddīyūn*} of all kinds. They promote these false allegations everywhere and by all means. These falsehoods can easily be absorbed by those who have failed to construct a true picture of ṭaṣawwuf.

① Among these falsehoods is the notion that there is somehow a basic contradiction between ṭaṣawwuf and face-to-face confrontation or struggle {*al-kafaḥa*}, or between ṭaṣawwuf and direct action {*al-‘amal*} and that ṭaṣawwuf and dependence on others are synonymous. The life of Shaykh ‘Abū-l-Ḥasan, which is *par excellence* the life of a true ṣūfī, is a refutation in itself of these false allegations.

He was deeply engaged in agriculture. He had a number of large farms which required his direct involvement in their planting, tilling and harvesting and overall maintenance. In the same realm he was necessarily a husbandman, as farming in those days was totally dependent on working livestock. He also was a breeder of fine horses which he used both for work and on his extensive travels and when he took the field of battle against the invading Crusaders {*aṣ-ṣalibīn*}. When he took the field of battle he was to be found in the front lines, a sword in both hands, protecting the Muslim community {*al-ummah*} from the invaders and exhorting his fellows to fight bravely. He was, in times of peace, deeply devoted to aiding the weak {*al-ḍa‘ifā’*} and the poor {*al-masākīn*} and backed them strongly in order that they might obtain their just rights in spite of the arrogance and indifference of the rulers.

② The materialists {*al-māddīyūn*} also allege that *taṣawwuf* is contrary to the pursuit of knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} and that *taṣawwuf* goes hand-in-hand with ignorance {*al-jahl*}. This lie is totally shattered by an examination of the life of ʿAbū-l-Ḥasan as well as al-Ghazālī and other ṣūfī luminaries who attained the highest summits of knowledge; they are so numerous that they cannot even be counted.

③ The materialists engrossed in the midst of their own worldly sensuality also allege that the ṣūfīs ignore the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. We have devoted a chapter in this book to refuting their calumnies.

④ Others in their obsessive concern with being neat and tidy assert that the ṣūfīs are unkempt and ill-dressed. Abū-l-Ḥasan, mindful of the ḥadīth on beauty, always took care to dress harmoniously and refrained from being overly strict or austere {*yatazamah*} as long as his provenance was hallāl.

« اللَّهُ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ »

ALLĀHU JAMILUṆ YUḤIBU-L-JAMAL

“Allāh is Beautiful — He loves the Beauty”

يَبْنَىءَ آدَمَ  
خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا  
وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

YĀĀ BANĪ ʿĀDAMA

KhUDhŪ ZINATAKUM ʿINDA KULLI MASJIDIṆ WA KULŪ WA-ShRABŪ  
WA LĀ TUSRIFŪ: ʾINNAHŪ LĀ YUḤIBBU-L-MUSRIFĪN

Oh Children of Adam

Wear your beautiful adornments in every place of prostration and eat and drink  
and do not be wasteful — surely He does not love the wasteful.

{7:31}

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ  
قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ

QUL:MAN ḤARRAMA ZĪNATA-LLĀHI

-L-LATĪ ʾAKhRAJA LIʿIBĀDIHI WA-Ṭ-TĀYYIBĀTI MIR-RIZQ:

QUL:HIYA LI-LLADhĪNA ʾĀMANŪ FĪ-L-ḤAYĀTI-D-DUNYĀ

KhĀLISATAṆ-YAWMA-L-QIYĀMAH

Say: Who has forbidden the ornaments of Allāh

which He has brought forth for His worshipful slaves and the pure things from His Provenance?

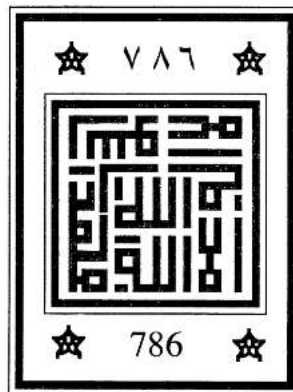
Say: On the Day of Reckoning these shall be solely for those who, in the life of this world,  
sincerely believed

{7:32p}

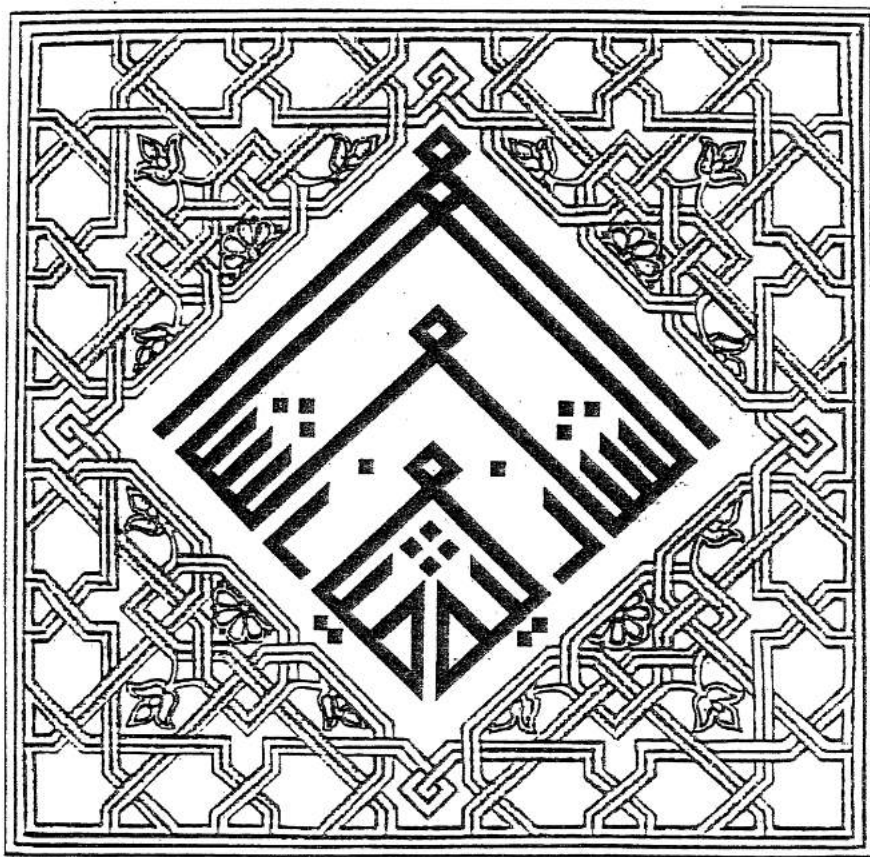
Ṣūfism in the end is ease {*al-istirsāl*} with Allāh and what He Wills and following {*mutābīʿah*} the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, in what he loves. It is a perspective {*ʾitibarā*}, a means {*wasīlah*} and a way {*ṭarīqāh*}. It is nearness {*qurb*} to Allāh and direct witnessing of Oneness {*at-tawhīd*} as an end {*al-ghāyah*}. Both the Way and the End and the very Life of the ṣūfī are summarized and explained by the following Ḥadīth Qudsī recorded as correct {*ṣaḥīḥ*} by the Muḥadith Abū ʿabdu-Llāh al-Bukḥārī and reported by Abī Hurayrah, may Allāh be content with him, who said, “The Messenger of Allāh, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said that he heard from his Lord, Glorious and Majestic,

« مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ ،  
وَمَا تَقْرَبُ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا أَرْضَيْتُ عَلَيْهِ .  
وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ ،  
فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ ،  
وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا ،  
وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا ،  
وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَا أُعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَئِنْ أَسْتَعَاذَ بِي لِأَعِيذَنَّهُ

“Who is an enemy to my friend I declare war on him.  
My worshipper does not come close to Me by anything more loved by Me than My Dues.  
And My worshipper does not cease to draw near to Me by voluntary acts until I love him,  
And when I love him I become the Hearing by which he hears  
And the Seeing by which he sees and the Hand by which he strikes,  
and the Feet by which he strides.  
And if he asks of Me anything I shall give it and if he seeks My Shelter I shall save him.”



المدرسة الشاذلية



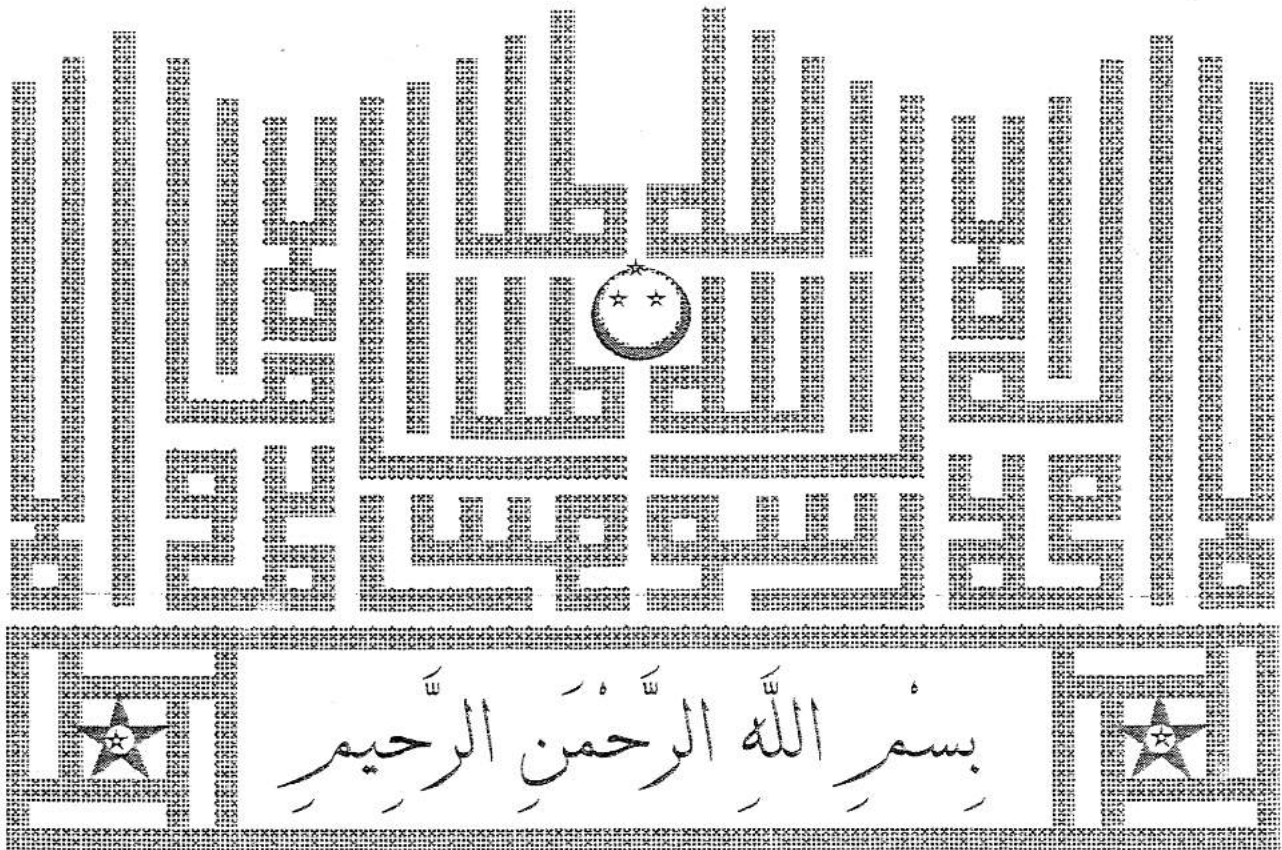
The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah

SHAYKH 'ĀBŪ-L-'ABBĀS AL-MURSI  
VOLUME TWO, BOOK TWO  
ORIGINS



*Masjid of 'Abū-l-Abbas al-Mursī in Alexandria*





**I**n the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing. Praise be to Allāh, Lord of all the worlds and Benedictions and Peace be on the best of Messengers and the Seal of the Prophets, our liege-lord Muḥammad, sent by Allāh as a mercy to all the worlds, and on his family and all of his companions and their followers and the sincere friends of Allāh until the end of time.

## AN END AND A BEGINNING

I thought of making what follows to be the foreword and I also thought of making it to be an afterword. I then asked myself, 'If this is the foreword what will be the afterword?' Then I found myself looking at it as an afterword but in the end I returned to myself and asked, 'If this will be at the end what will be at the beginning?' And so I returned to looking at it as a foreword.

In fact it is both a foreword and an afterword; a beginning and an ending. What I have to say in it is so important to me that I can write it once as a foreword and write it again as an afterword. Let it therefore serve as both my opening and closing statement.<sup>1</sup> I pray to Allāh that the mind of the reader may be illuminated by its insights and that the heart of the reader may be guided by its contents.



In this age of ours in which the ornaments and beauties of the earth have become worn and in which we are witness to a new world civilisation built and based on a system of sensuous materialism, there still exist in the Islamic world, al-ḥamdu-li-llāh, groups of people with pure hearts who live with hope

<sup>1</sup> This foreword appeared in the first edition of *al-ʿArif bi-Llāh*, ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, which was published by Dar al-Maṣriyyah {Cairo, 1976} in a single stand-alone edition. It was then republished in a consolidated edition of Shaykh ʿAbdu-l-Halīm's writings on the Shādhḍhuliyah by Dar al-Maʿarif {Cairo, 1983} as the second section of *Qaḍiyyatu-t-Taṣawwuf al-Madrastu-sh-Shādhḍhuliyah*.

in a future for humanity which is abundant with truth and goodness in the realm of *dīn* and spirit, the realm of brotherhood and benevolence.

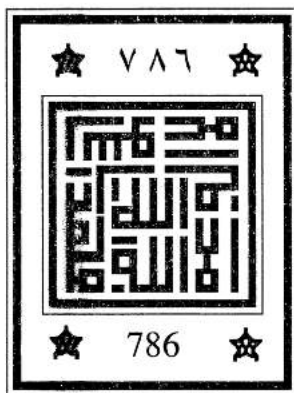
This realm, the origin of which is Divine or Heavenly Revelation {*waḥī as-samāʿ*}, in which individuals and groups strive to tread the Way of Allāh and follow the Revelation, is the realm of Taṣawwuf, which is luminously represented by the great Ṣūfis who are the living examples and expression of its original principles {*mabādī*} and foundations {*qawāʿid*}.

Their life, in its entirety, corresponds with the Divine Pedagogy {*at-tarbiyatu-l-ʿilāhiyah*} and the Guidance {*hadi*} of the Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, both in the carrying out of the weighty orders and the simple prescriptions. Moreover they strive their utmost to become the inheritors {*warathah*} of the prophets, peace be upon them all, in their knowledge {*ilm*} and their behaviour {*sulūk*}, as well as in their states and stations {*ʾaḥwāl wa maqāmāt*}.

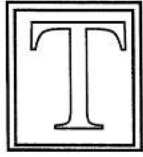
Some people, however, are clearly neither aware of the meaning of Taṣawwuf nor are they aware of the relationship between ʾIslām and Taṣawwuf. When they read about such figures as Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī, they wonder if the conduct of the Shaykh is a part of ʾIslām or whether it is outside of and extraneous to ʾIslām. Many people asked similar questions when we published our book on Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Shādhīdī, may Allāh sanctify their secret. Indeed after the publication of that earlier book, a number of articles appeared which revealed the lack of clarity about Taṣawwuf itself and about the relationship between Ṣufism and ʾIslām. In view of this it is our intention to place before the reader this introduction, which is concerned with clarifying that relationship.

We shall endeavour to support our position by reference both to the Shariʿah and the sayings of some of the Ṣūfis in order that we may, without bias, indicate the true and correct point of view in the hope that our readers will thus be guided to clarity and that those who follow the Path will follow it with guidance and knowledge.

Such an introduction is necessary, and indeed imperative, in view of both the times and the need to answer the many questions which have been provoked by some of our earlier books. We pray for guidance from Allāh in this matter.



## ʿISLĀM AND ṢŪFISM



he relationship between ʿIslām and Ṣūfism, both as a system and as a subject, will not be readily understood unless we are able to define Ṣūfism in a way that fully clarifies its reality {ḥaqīqah}. This is in no way an easy task because Ṣūfī scholars, past and present, have indicated there are more than a thousand definitions for Ṣūfism. Each of these definitions has its own weight and each has its own value, for each definition originated from a great master of the Path and practitioner of the Way. It would thus be presumptuous of us to judge them, preferring this one over that, relegating this one to a first class category and another to the second class. As in a field of flowers, each has its own unique beauty and perfume, and the judgment as to the efficacy of that beauty and the redolence of the scent is very much dependent on who it is that is strolling in the garden. What should be our criterion? How can we begin to weigh these people, given their refined taste and elevated spiritual perceptions? Indeed what scale could we use to weigh them? Might we imagine that it could be done by the modern scientific method based on observation and deduction, or might it be done on the authority of the mind with its insistence on research and conclusion? Or shall we choose to carry out our assessment in the realm of the authority of the spirit {bi-sulṭāni-r-rūḥ}, illumination {ʿishrāq} and inspiration {ʿilhām}.



Let us look at the question of what is Taṣawwuf or Ṣūfism from some different perspectives.

### • Ṣūfism and Science {at-taṣawwuf wa-l-ʿilm}

Is it possible that the scientific method of observation and deduction can enter into the citadel of Ṣūfism? If we choose the scientific method we shall only be able to discern the outer form of Ṣūfism and not the spirit or the essence of Ṣūfism. Indeed this method will result in complete failure to understand Ṣūfism. Neither of the contemporary sciences of psychology or sociology have been able to touch the essence and reality of Ṣūfism, for psychological and sociological studies inevitably distort the view of Ṣūfism, just as they do with all studies having to do with the spirit, revelation, inspiration or, generally speaking, religion.

- Modern psychological and sociological studies confine themselves to the realm of observable sensuous phenomena; to that which can be seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelt, which is to say observed, noted and recorded. Indeed deductions arrived at from outside of this tightly defined arena are relegated to the realm of conjecture and are viewed with suspicion by the 'scientific' community.

Bt their own confession, their criteria and parameters are those of the observatory, the clinical laboratory or 'field' study. Ṣūfism remains outside of the arbitrarily created boundaries of their research other than as a possible subject for psychological, sociological or, perhaps, cultural anthropological studies.

Ṣūfism, which is spirit, revelation, inspiration, illumination, does not enter into the realm of these studies and consequently these studies fail in revealing anything other than the outer edges or form of Ṣūfism; the peripheral shape may be discerned but, in truth, little else is apparent.

By modern science we mean the form of science now prevailing throughout the contemporary world. This science, for the most part, confines itself strictly to the realm of the material {*māddi*} and to the material alone. Any research done outside of the realm of the material is not considered to be properly 'scientific'. In saying this we do not seek to denigrate modern science, but rather we seek to indicate that because modern science has chosen to limit itself to the realm of the material it can never lead us to any true understanding of the meaning and essence of Sūfism, as Sūfism is simply beyond the realm which modern science is prepared to consider.

Consequently anything which is said about Sūfism or Sūfis in the name of whatever branch of modern science touches on nothing else than the outer form and shape of Sūfis and is useless in so far as the spirit and essence of Sūfism is concerned.

### • Sūfism and the Intellect {*at-taṣawwuf wa-l-ʿaql*}

- If the techniques of modern science fail to provide a definition for Sūfism, should we perhaps look to find a definition with the realm of the mind or the intellect {*al-ʿaql*} with its insistence on logical research and the process of deduction based on analogical reasoning?

Can the mind lead us, with certainty, across the vast seas of Sūfism or can it lead down and through the oceanic depths which are in themselves inspirations derived from Divine Revelation?

The intellect revolves around the material and its basis. It devises means to travel to heaven in rockets, or to descend into the depths of the sea in bathyscaphes, in order to discover the secrets hidden within these spaces, or it creates the means to mechanically tunnel into deep strata of the earth in order to uncover and bring to light what is hidden in the darkest obscurity.

The intellect, especially in our age, is the active creator of, and participant in, technologies and processes ranging from the needle to the lunar lander. It is the inventor of chemicals, simple and complex. It is the instrument of uncovering the laws which govern the deepest secrets of matter, of sub-atomic structures, of genetic building blocks and the most minute molecular mirrors that are the very paradigms of both chaos and order, anarchy and organisation, wave and particle. As such the intellect is the tool *par excellence* of the modern sciences.

- But the intellect, with material {*al-mādah*}, no matter how subtle, as its domain has in reality nothing to do with the Unknown {*al-ghayb*}. Neither, in all truth, does the intellect have anything to do with the Veiled {*al-sātir*} nor does it have anything to do with the Concealed {*al-hijāb*}; neither the Veiled Heavenly Hosts {*masātīr al-malaʾu-l-alaʾa*} nor the Concealed Spirituality {*al-mahhjubu-r-rūhī*}. Neither does it have to do with the Sacred Ascent {*al-maʿariju-l-quds*} nor the Stations of the Spirit {*manāzilu-l-ʾarwāḥ*}.

The intellect has failed to produce a mental measure capable of separating the Authentic {*al-saḥih*} from the Mistaken {*al-khaṭaʾ*} in the realm of the Spiritual World, or of discerning the True {*al-ḥaqq*} from the False {*al-bāṭil*} in the Unveiling of the Unknown {*fī majālu-l-ghayb*}.

Aristotle's system has failed in this connection as have the methods of Descartes.



Indeed all the mental systems and constructs that have been employed in the attempt to uncover the hidden secrets and the concealed structures of the Divine Domains {*ālīmu-l-ʿilāhiyah*} have failed—then and now.

This failure of the intellect to successfully navigate within the realm of mysticism {*al-taṣawwuf*} or gnosis {*al-maʿrifah*} has been acknowledged by Pythagoras, Plato and the Platonists in the West and al-Kindi, Farabi and Ibn Sina in the Muslim East. It has also been attested to by Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazzali and the majority of other Šūfī thinkers without exception {*ʿala-l-ʾiqlāq*}.

They all confessed that, when they searched through the history of human thought, the mind stood dumb in front of the reality of spiritual states and stations. These confessions did not belittle the mind or the intellect for, in truth, it has its own vast realm in the universe and it is within this realm, and from what has been dredged or deduced out of it, that contemporary ‘civilisation’ has been, we might say, forcibly built.

### • The Šūfī Way or Method {*al-manḥaj aṣ-šūfī*}

Whereas both the scientific and intellectual methods fail to comprehend Šūfism in its essence, all the Šūfīs and Philosophers of Illumination {*falāsafatu-l-ʾiṣhrāq*}<sup>2</sup> have attested to a well-defined system in which they believed and trusted, which is variously termed the ‘way of the heart’ {*al-mahaju-l-qalbī*} or the ‘spiritual way’ {*al-manhaju-r-rūhī*} or the ‘way of insight’; perhaps it might be better translated as ‘the visionary way’ {*al-mahaju-l-baṣīrah*}. It is a system, a way that has been recognised by all religions and lovers of wisdom {*philosophos*}, ancient and modern, eastern and western.

Allāh, the Almighty, has said,

إِنَّ التَّسْمِعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

ʾINNA-S-SAMʿI WA-L-BAṢARA WA-L-FUʾĀDA KULLU ʾUWLĀĀʾIKA ANHU MASʾULĀ

*Truly the hearing and the vision and the heart— all of them will be called to account*  
{17:36}

Here Allāh is saying that the heart is as accountable {*masʾul*} in its sphere as hearing and seeing are in their domains {*muḥīṭah*}. ʾImām Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, may Allāh be pleased with him, in expressing the views of the Šūfīs and the Illuminists, states that there is two-fold proof that an inner spiritual knowledge {*maʿarifah*}, not based on the senses, exists.

“The first of these proofs is the wonder {*ʿajāʾib*} of the veridical dream {*ar-ruʾyāaṣ-ṣāqaqah*} which penetrates the unknown {*al-ghayb*}. If it happens that such a true dream occurs when we are asleep, it should not be taken that it is impossible that such might not happen whilst we are awake, as the difference between the sleep state and the awake state is only in the retirement of the senses. It also can be seen that there are many people who do not see and hear even when they are in the waking state due to their self-absorption.

<sup>2</sup> or *al-iṣhrāqīyūn* = The Illuminists. A Šūfī school of metaphysics associated with such diverse figures as Hasan al-Baṣrī, Yaḥyā as-Suhrawardī, Ruzbehan Baqlī, as-Simnānī, Najmud-d-dīn Kubra and others, may Allāh sanctify their secret, across time and space.



“The second is the indirect discourse {*ʾikḥbār*} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, about the unknown and the indications of the future {*ʾamūru fī-l-mustaqbal*}.”

If this can be considered to be possible or permissible {*jāz*} for the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, it might also be possible or permissible for others. If he had information about, and insight into, the reality of such tokens or signs, it is entirely possible that others in the creation might also have such information or insights into reality. They of course would not be called Prophets {*ʾanabiyyā*} of Allāh but, rather, would be called Friends {*awliyyāh*} of Allāh.

Consequently anyone who believes in the Prophets, peace be upon them all, and the truth or genuineness of the Veridical Dream, is bound to reside<sup>3</sup> in the Abode of Vision or, to say it in another way, he must abide in the door of the heart opening out onto the World of the Malakūt<sup>4</sup>, which is the door of inspiration {*al-ʾilhām*}, effusion of awe {*an-naḥathu-r-rauʿ*} and spirituality {*ar-ruḥi*}.

ʾImām Abū Ḥamid al-Gḥazālī, may Allāh be pleased with him, says the following about prophethood in his book *The Deliverance from Error*<sup>5</sup>: “Allāh has made the matter comprehensible for his creatures by giving them a glimpse of prophethood during their sleep. The sleeper can glimpse the Unknown either clearly {*ṣarīḥ*} or in the raiment of similitude {*kiswatu mithāl*}.”

And if the ‘vision’ doesn’t originate in the person himself, he said, there are also some people who fall unconscious like the dead and don’t show {*yazūl*} any feelings and yet an onlooker hears them and sees them and they show the Unseen and furnish unmistakable proof for others. Their strong sensitivity is the reason that they grasp the Unseen.

The ʾImām does not, however rely on these two ways alone but also provides examples from Qurʾān and Ḥadīth.

Allāh, the Almighty, has said,

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا  
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

WA-L-LADĤĤĤĤĤĤ JĀHADŪ FĪNĀ LANAHDĪ YANNAHUM SUBULANA  
WA ʾINNA-LLĀHA LAMAʿA-L-MUḤSINĪN

*And those who strive for Us - We shall surely guide them to Our Paths.*

*And truly Allāh is with those who excel.*

{29:69}

<sup>3</sup> an idiomatic expression which can also be construed to mean — *he must believe in*

<sup>4</sup> *al-malakūt* = the World of Dominion which corresponds to the soul {*an-naḥs*} in the human being with the heart {*al-qalb*} as its centre. Since it also contains forms of the Spirit {*ar-ruḥ*} it is also known as the realm of the angelic spirits {*ʾalamu-l-ʾarwāḥ*}. The place of the Malakūt is above the al-Mulk or the World of the Realm, which is the world of physical existence corresponding to the body {*al-jism*}. This is the dimension of Witnessing {*ʾalamu-sh-ṣḥāḥadah*} which is the lowest of the Worlds of Universal Manifestation. The highest world of Universal Manifestation which is situated above the Malakūt is the World of Sovereignty, al-Jabarūt, which has the Spirit {*ar-ruḥ*} as its centre and is in itself the manifestation of the Divine Principle. It rests just beneath the World of Lahūt, which is the lowest of the Invisible Worlds of Pure Principle. For a graphic view see page 23 of *Orisons* Volume One of the *Madarastu-sh-Shādhḥuliyyah*.

<sup>5</sup> *al-munqidh min aḍ-ḍalāl* published by Dār al-Kitāb al-Ḥadīthah {Cairo}

The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said,

“He that applies what he knows, Allāh will cause to inherit knowledge from where he knows not.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا

YĀĀʾAYYUHĀ-L-LADHĪNĀ ʾĀMANUŪ ʾIN TATAQU-LLĀHA  
YAJʿ-LLAKUM FURQĀNĀ

*Oh you who believe, safeguard your selves for Allāh  
and He will provide you with the Criterion with which to discern the True from the false.*  
{8:29}

It is said that *furqān*<sup>6</sup> is a light by which one can distinguish between the True and the false and that it alleviates all doubt. The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, was asked about the following ʾayah and what was meant by the laying open of the heart:

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ

ʾAFAMAN ŠĤARAḤA-LLĀHU ŠADRAHU LI-L-ʾISLĀMI  
FA-HUWA ʿALĀ NURIM-MIR-RABBIH

*The one whose heart Allāh lays open to the acceptance of ʾIslām is in the Light of his Lord*  
{39:22}

He, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said that this laying open is “a broadening. If the Light is projected {*quḍḥafa*} into the heart the heart is opened {*šḥaraḥa*} and happiness {*ʾinshirah*} springs forth from it.”<sup>7</sup> He also said, “Among my people are two originators {*muḥaddithayn*}, two teachers {*muʿalimayn*} and two speakers {*mukalimayn*} and ʿUmar is from among them.” The originator is the inspired one {*al-mulaham*} who has insight {*kashf*} into the truth from the inside of his heart {*bi-bāṭin qalbihi*} rather than arriving at it on the basis of sensuous outer impressions. Allāh makes clear in the Qurʾān that *taqwā*<sup>8</sup> is the key to guidance and inspiration. The knowledge of al-Kḥiḍr, peace be upon him, was not from his senses or his mind but from the Divine Knowledge, of which Allāh says,

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا

WA ʿALLAMNĀHU MIL-LADUNNĀ ʿILMĀ

*And We taught him knowledge from Our Presence.*  
{18:65}

<sup>6</sup> *furqānā* from *fq*= to cleave, to separate, to sever, to divide; to make a distinction, distinguish, discern, discriminate, differentiate. *al-furqān* = the Qurʾān as the means of distinguished the True from the false.

<sup>7</sup> *šḥaraḥa* from *šḥrḥ* = to cut open, to lay bare, to expose, to bare; to explain, to elucidate, to interpret; to lay open the heart; II to dissect, to dismember, to anatomise; VII to be open, relaxed, happy, joyful.

<sup>8</sup> *taqwā* from *wqy* = to guard, to preserve, to protect, to take good care of, to shield, V & VIII + to be wary of, to be on one's guard against, to fear Allāh. It is this last definition that is used by most translators who render it as God fearing.

There is another dimension suggested by Muḥammad ʾAsad, Allāh have mercy on him, which bares consideration. He says that, “the positive content of this expression — namely the awareness of His all-presence and the desire to mould one's existence in the light of this awareness” suggests that it could equally {or perhaps better} be translated as “God-consciousness” rather than God-fearing. Given the complex subtleties of its meaning we prefer to leave it, as we do other words like *ṣalāh*, *maṣjid*, *qiblah* etc. in the transliterated Arabic form with this serving as a note to the reader.

### • The Ṣūfī Way is an 'Islāmic Way

The Way or Method of the Ṣūfīs, as can readily be seen, is a true and clearly 'Islāmic Way. It is a 'philosophical' system in the sense of its being a way that cherishes and loves wisdom {*sophós*}<sup>9</sup> and this in spite of the objections of the intellectual rationalist {*al-ʿaqlīyīn*} 'philosophers'. This Way, based as it is on 'love' and the 'heart', is one that has been recognised down through the centuries by all the true philosophers and metaphysicians; both from the east and from the west.

Moreover it is a way and a system which has been well tested over time and proven to be efficacious and correct. 'Imām Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, when he was at the height of his powers and in the highest of position of the Doctors of his time, came to the end of the rope of the way of intellect, tried the way of love and the heart and found that it was correct. Untold others have tried it and they too have confirmed its correctness. 'Imām al-Ghazālī, may Allāh be pleased with him, said,

"I was in seclusion {*al-khīlwāt*} and many matters were made clear to me. What I can say for the benefit of others is that I came to know with all certainty {*yaqīn*} that the Ṣūfīs are travellers on the Path to Allāh {*as-sālikūn li-tarīqu-llāh*}. Their Way is the most excellent {*ʿaḥsan*} of ways; their Road is the road that is the most correct {*ʿaṣwab*}<sup>10</sup>; their manner of behaving {*ʿakhlāq*} is the purest {*ʿazkā*} behaviour; if all the minds of the intellectuals were gathered together along with the wisdom of the wise and the knowledge {*ʿilm*} of the scholars of the Law {*sharʿah*} for the purpose of changing or improving their conduct or behaviour, they would not be able to do so. Their words and their silence, their movements and their stillness, spring from the light of the lamp of prophethood {*min nūri n-nishkatu-n-nubbuwah*}, and there is no light on the face of the earth beyond that by which one may be illuminated.

"In general I may say that the primary condition {*shurūṭ*} of this way is the purification of the heart from everything else other than Allāh. The key to the system is to run from everything forbidden in the worship {*ṣalāh*} and to entirely {*bi-kullīyah*} drown {*ʿistaghṛāq*} the heart in the Remembrance {*dhikr*} of Allāh. The end of the Way is the disappearance {*fanāʾ*} of everything in Allāh.

"From the very beginning of entering the Way, spiritual insights {*al-mukāshshifāt*} and eye witnessed visions {*al-mushāhadāt*} commence until the point that, even in the the awake conscious {*ʿayyadh*} state, travellers see angels and the spirits of the prophets, peace be upon them all, and they hear their voices and benefit from them. {In time} this is followed by ascents to higher planes, the description of which neither language can describe nor can tongues express."

The Master {*al-ʿustādh*} René Guenon {Shaykh 'Abdu-l-Waḥabb Yaḥyā} said, during the course of a lecture which he delivered at the University of Paris, in rebuttal to those who belittle this system, "Some people ask, 'Is it possible to go beyond the this material world to the metaphysical?' We never hesitate to reply that clearly it is not only possible but [that world] actually exists. They might say, 'But you lack proof.'

"What proof can one offer as to the existence of this 'realm'? It is really quite strange to ask for proof of the existence of a science instead of endeavouring to employ it and journey in its way. One who attains knowledge does not care what is said about the knowledge they have acquired. They know it.

<sup>9</sup> *sophós* {wisdom} + *sophía* {skill} = skilful wisdom. Some orientalist accord this to be one of the roots of Ṣūfism.

<sup>10</sup> *ʿaṣwab* from *ṣāb* = to the point, on target, direct, to hold true, to attain the goal, to hit the mark

“It is quite clear that contemporary philosophers, by substituting a ‘theory of knowledge’ for real knowledge {*al-maʿarifah*}, have fully revealed the total incompetence of modern philosophy.”

• **Ṣūfism is not arrived at through reading.**

The Way or the Program {*al-manhaj*} is foremost the Purification of the Self {*tazkiyyatu-n-nafs*} or the Clarification of Vision {*ʿijālāʿu-l-baṣīr*}. Can this be attained through reading and study? Does the road to knowledge {*maʿarifah*} of the Unknown {*al-ghayb*} proceed through reaserch, study and analogical reasoning? Of course not.

ʿImām al-Ghazālī, may Allāh be pleased with him, explains the true appraoch as he tried and tested it.

“I started out by reading books and partaking of their knowledge. I read such works as *Qūt al-Qulūb* {Nourishment of the Hearts} by Abī Ṭalīb al-Makki, Allāh have mercy on him, as well as the books of al-Hārith al-Muḥāsabī and various writings by al-Junayd, ash-Shiblī, and Abī Yazid al-Bisṭāmīn, may Allāh sanctify them and have mercy on them, until I finally came to understand their noble intentions and thus understood that their internal characteristics and states cannot be reached through intellection but, rather, must be arrived at through direct tasting {*bi-dhawq*}, circumstantial actuality {*al-hāl*} and the transmutation of personality {*tabaddil aṣ-ṣafāt*}.

• “There is a great difference between knowing about health and its causes and conditions and actually being healthy; between the awareness that drunkenness is a state brought about by the fumes of alcohol rising from the stomach which then affect thought and — actually being drunk. The drunkard is not necessarily aware of all the factors that have contributed to his drunken state but he most certainly feels them. Similarly the doctor, upon falling ill, knows what good health is and what its conditions are but he lacks them and consequently suffers illness due to their lack.

“In the same way there is a difference between knowing the knowledge {*al-maʿarifah*}, the conditions {*ash-shurūṭ*} and the reasons {*al-ʿasbāb*} for abstinence or voluntary poverty {*az-zuhd*} and actually being an ascetic {*az-zahid*} and renouncing the self of the world {*ad-dunyā*}.

“I knew with certainty that [the authors of the books I read] were people of states rather than words. What was to be gained with all the knowledge I had acquired? There remained only what could be tasted and felt.”

ʿIbn Sina, when he sought to mark out the path of insight, did so not by mentioning reading and research but rather by tasting {*dhawq*} and conscious journeying {*sulūk*}.

Abū-l-Ḥasan an-Nawwawī clearly states that Ṣūfism is not a kind of knowledge, for if it were it could be arrived at through learning. The way of the advancement of the soul is attained through unveiling {*jilwāh*} the bride of the soul and not research {*baḥṭh*} into limitations.

• **Ṣūfism and the Refinement of Character {*at-taṣwwuf wa-l-ʿakhlāq*}.**

Can Ṣūfism be said to be the refinement of character or moral behaviour {*al-ʿakhlāq*}?

Many modern writers, taking their lead from Ṣūfīs of the past, have defined tāssawuf as al-ʿakhlāq, which can be translated in a variety of ways, all of which circle around the idea of perfecting one’s character or morals through a variety of means. Abū Bakr al-Kittanī {d. 322H} said, “Ṣūfism is character {*kḥulq*}. Whoever exceeds you in character exceeds you in purity {*aṣ-ṣafāʾ*}.”



Abū Muḥammad al-Jarīrī {d. 311H}, when asked about Ṣūfism, said, “[It is] entering into the innate resplendent {*sanīy*} character {*khulq*} of your being and departing from all base {*danīy*} behaviour.”<sup>11</sup>

Abū Ḥusayn An-Nūrī, Allāh sanctify his secret, denied that Ṣūfism can be attained by a systemized strategy of incremental progress or that it could be a form of acquired knowledge {*‘ilman kasbiyā*}. He asserted that it is al-ʿakhlāq, saying, “at-Taṣawwuf is neither a formal convention {*rasmā*} nor is it scientific knowledge {*‘ilm*}. If it were a formal convention it could be arrived at through effort and application; if it were a branch of scientific knowledge it could be arrived at through learning. Rather it is that it is the original character created by Allāh [in the human].<sup>12</sup> which cannot be attained either by effort or by learning.” In another place an-Nūrī defined Ṣūfism as ‘freedom, generosity, simplicity and compassion.’

So, whilst it is true that Ṣūfism can be defined as al-ʿakhlāq, this alone cannot define taṣawwuf. And if we look at the people of noble character who live in pursuit of virtue we will find that whilst they may be defined, at least in terms of the society in which they live and move, as being upright and pure people, they are not necessarily all Ṣūfis. For example Ḥassan al-Baṣra {d. circa 105H}, may Allāh be content with him, was a man of the most exemplary and refined character. Indeed he was a living example of what pure and complete morality should be and more than that, he circulated and made known this virtue through his persuasive speech, strong logic and ideal behaviour. Yet, for all that this is so, we cannot, strictly speaking, call him a Ṣūfī.

At the same time it is completely natural that al-ʿakhlāq, whether you define it as good morality or refined character {for both are equally part of it}, should be one of the pursuits of the Ṣūfī, both in the beginning and at the end of the journey as well being a permanent companion along the Way — and as such a companion that can never be deserted or left behind.

ʿIn Sīnā described some of the facets of a Ṣūfī by saying, “A ṣūfī is brave, for he does not fear death. He is generous and far from falsehood. He is a forgiving person, for his soul is so vast that it cannot be reduced by the offence of another person. He forgets his hatreds because he is busy remembering Allāh.” Yet all of these attributes still do not provide a complete description of either Ṣūfism or a Ṣūfī.

### • Ṣūfism and Asceticism {*at-taṣawwuf wa az-zuhd*}

Is the Way {*aṭ-ṭarīq*} a matter of asceticism?

Many people are unable to differentiate between Ṣūfism and asceticism and yet other people consider asceticism to be the way that leads to Ṣūfism or that it {*az-zuhd*} is a way that leads to the unveiling of vision {*jallāʿu-l-baṣīr*} which is to say: prescience.

When we contemplate asceticism we find that it comes in many forms. The most common form is that which arises from the awareness, reached through logic and mentation, that the best thing in life is serenity, peace of mind and quietude.

It also logically follows that such a life of serenity, peace of mind and quietude cannot be attained by chasing after worldly objects or prosperity or, especially, by following one’s physical desires. It is easy to see that those people who fight to gain a rich life usually only gain worry, anxiety and depression. It follows logically that the path to serenity lies in avoiding such a struggle.

<sup>11</sup> for this and the above see *ar-Riislātu-l-Qushayriyah* pp 148-149

<sup>12</sup> see the Chapter of the Fig {95:4} “Surely we created man in the best of forms {*aḥsani taqwīm*}.”



There is another kind of asceticism, which concerns itself with avoiding the pleasures of this life, which are considered subtle and misleading traps, in favour of the pleasures of the hereafter.

Ibn Sīnā says, “There is one *zāhid* {an ascetic} who avoids the pleasures of this life in order that he may attain to peace within this life. Peace is foremost in his mind and so he does not look beyond this point and thus neither do the pleasures of life cross his mind nor are they even of a secondary concern. Another *zāhid* abstains from the pleasures of this life or puts them off in order to gain the pleasures of the Final World {*al-ʿākhirah*}.” Ibn Sīnā calls such an ascetic and such asceticism an exchange {*al-badal*}. Such a *zāhid*, he says, “purchases the pleasures of *al-ʿākhirah* with the coin of the pleasures of this worldly life {*ad-dunyā*}.”

The ultimate goal of such a *zāhid* is to be granted by Allāh in *al-ʿākhirah* greater pleasures than those which he has deferred or abstained from in *ad-dunyā*.

Ibn Sīnā considers this kind of a *zāhid* to be a money changer {*al-baddāl*}; a merchant {*at-tājir*}.

Undoubtedly such merchants receive their reward from Allāh in *al-ʿākhirah* and many also gain peace in this life. But neither the merchant ascetic nor the seeker of peace at the price of engagement can be really considered to be a Ṣūfī, for in neither case is their singular true aim and goal — Allāh. In both cases Allāh is a secondary goal. In the first case peace comes before Allāh and in the second case the pleasures of *al-ʿākhirah* come before Allāh. In truth they are both merchants desirous of doing business with Allāh.

These forms of ‘exchange asceticism’ are neither considered to complete {*kāmil*} nor can it be imagined that either one of them will serve to fully cleanse the internal mirror [of the heart].

No doubt that prescience can be obtained through asceticism, but only when abstinence and forbearance are truly and exclusively for the pleasure of Allāh — and the pleasure of Allāh alone.

When abstinence is reserved solely for the pleasure of Allāh, then all things become — as it were — no more than the wing of a mosquito, for by dying to all things for the pleasure of Allāh the true value of things becomes apparent. This is the ascent of spirit over matter and simultaneously it is the redemption of matter.

Thus we may say that whilst the path of Ṣūfism contains both refined character {*al-ʿakhlāq*} and asceticism, it is yet more than either of them or the total of both of them.

### • Ṣūfism and Worship {*at-taṣawwuf wa al-ʿibādah*}

Is Ṣūfism worship?

Is the Way a pursuit of worship {*al-ʿibādah*}, of that which is prescribed by Allāh {*al-furūd*} by that which is supererogatory {*nawāfil*}? Is the Way to be found in an excess of supererogatory activities; rising from sleep in the depths of the night for prayer, fasting every other day, performing thousands of Remembrances {*al-ʿadhkār*}, Supplications {*al-adʿiyah*}, Petitions for Forgiveness {*al-ʿistighfār*}?

Without a doubt it can be said that worship directly aids in cleansing the soul {*an-nafs*} and the purification of the spirit {*ar-rūḥ*} but, again, if done in order to enter the Garden {*al-jannah*} and gain a reward {*ath-thawāb*} it remains a rewardable worship and the worshipper remains a worshipper and not necessarily a Ṣūfī.

A worshipper has a high station, but just as certain forms of ascetism can, as we have seen, be considered an ‘exchange’, so too can a worshipper attend to their worship as a ‘worker’ {*al-‘āmil*} or, as Ibn Sinā says, “as a labourer who labours in the dunyā to get a reward in the ‘ākhirah.”<sup>13</sup>

The Ṣūfī, on the other hand, “seeks the primal truth {*al-ḥaqqu-l-‘awwal*} and no thing other than it and desires only to worship Allāh for the sake of Allāh alone because Allāh, and only Allāh, deserves to be worshipped and should not be worshipped either out of fear or out of the desire for reward.”<sup>14</sup>

Sayyidah Rābi‘ah al-‘Adawiyyah, may Allāh sanctify her secret, says, “Oh Allāh. If I am worshipping You because I fear the Fire {*an-nār*} then burn me with those fires. If I am worshipping You out of desire for the Garden {*al-jannah*} then please deprive me of it. But if I am worshipping You for the sake of Your Love {*muḥabatic*} please do not deprive me of Your Eternal Beauty {*jamāliku-l-‘āzli*}.”

She, Allāh be content with her, also says, “I never worshipped Allāh out of fear of His Fire or out of desire for His Garden. I would then be like an employee {*al-‘ājir*}. Rather I did worship Him out of love {*ḥabā*} of Him and intense desire {*shawq*} for Him.”

In truth if Allāh, praised be He on high, is worshipped out of desire for the Garden or in fear of the Fire, it cannot then be said that He is the prime and sole object of worship, for the ultimate goal will be other than Allāh, and as such something between the worshipper and Allāh. Such worship will never yield the secret of the unveiled mirror of the purified heart.

### •To your Lord belongs the Ultimate End {*ilā rabbika muntahāhā*} (79:44)

Thus the Ṣūfī is a pure worshipper, a rigorous ascetic and a being of noble refined character and yet the Ṣūfī is more than this, for there is yet another dimension which is that of will {*al-‘irādah*} and practice {*ar-riyāḍah*}. A will which is wholeheartedly determined {*muṣammim*} and a practice that does not waver {*tazīl*} no matter what obstacle it meets along the path of arrival {*fī sabīl al-wuṣūl*} to actual knowledge of Allāh mindful that, in the Words of Allāh most high, that,

إِلَى رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَاهَا

‘ILĀ RABBIKA MUŤTAHĀHĀ

*To your Lord belongs the Ultimate End*  
{79:44}

Will and practice must cooperate in arriving — by the grace of Allāh {*bi-tawfiq Allāh*} — at that Ultimate End — and Beginning — and to do so they must be at peace {*taskūn*} both with one another and, most importantly, together in complete harmony with the Guidance of Allāh.

Allāh, praised be He, in His Generous Book that resolves all doubts and clearly discriminates between Truth and lies, orders us on the tongue of the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him,

<sup>13</sup> *al-Ishārāt* Ibn Sinā

<sup>14</sup> *al-Ishārāt* Ibn Sinā

فَفِرُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ تَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

FAFIRRUŪ ʾILĀ-LLĀH ; ʾINNI LAKUM-MINHU TADḥIRUM-MUBĪN

*Flee to Allāh. Truly I am to you a clear warner from Him.*

{51:50}

One flees to Allāh from covering up {*kufr*} the Truth to certain belief {*al-ʾimān*}; one flees to Allāh from submission {*aṭ-ṭāʿāt*} to proximity {*al-qurbāt*}; one flees from the universe {*al-kawn*} to the Creator of the universe; one flees from bliss {*an-naʿimah*} to the Bestower of bliss; one flees from creations {*al-khalq*} to the Creator and from ones own self {*an-nafs*} to the Lord of one's own self.

The flight to Allāh never ends, for there is no end to ascension {*miʿrāj*}, and as the flight to Allāh is continuous so there is no end to the flight {*hijrah*} to Allāh. Our liege-lord, the Prophet ʾIbrāhīm, on whom be peace, said,

إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَى رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

ʾINNĪ MUHĀJIRUN ʾILĀ RABBĪ ; ʾINNAHŪ HUWA-L-ʿAZĪZU-L-ḤAKĪM

*I shall take flight to my Lord. Truly He is the All-Mighty, the Wise.*

{29:26}

The Prophet ʾIbrāhīm is taking flight from the domain of evil and emigrating to his Lord through all his deeds, in both action and repose, in sleep and wakefulness, indeed with each breath of his body.

- The emigration {*al-hijrah*} to Allāh and the flight {*al-firār*} to Him have one and the same meaning. It is a comprehensive immersion {*mustaghriq shāmil*} in Him and opening to Him {*yashḥaḥahu*}.

The words of Allāh supply the directive:

قُلْ إِنْ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
لَا شَرِكَ لَهُ ۚ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

QUL ʾINNA ṢALĀTĪ WA NUSUKĪ WA MAḥYĀYA WA MAMĀTĪ LI-LLĀHI

RABBĪ-L-ʿĀLAMĪNA LĀ ShARIKA LAH :

WA BI-DḥĀLIKA ʾUMIRTU WA ʾANA ʾAWWAL-L-MUSLIMĪN

*Say truly my prayer, my acts of worship, my life and my death are for Allāh {alone},  
the Sustaining Lord of all the Worlds who has no partner.  
and by this I have been ordered and I am foremost among those who have surrendered.*

{6:162-3}

Thus one's worship, one's life and one's death are all in the context of one's surrender {*al-ʾislām*}.

This surrender is nothing less than the total voluntary surrender to Allāh — and to Allāh alone. A surrender not directed to any other being or possible deity for there are none such, and a surrender undertaken neither out of desire for the Garden nor fear of the Fire or for any other reason.

• Allāh says to the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him,

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ  
بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرَدُّونَ وَجْهَهُ  
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ  
وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا  
وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۚ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا



## • The Ṣūfī Way as seen by al-Gḥazālī and ʿIbn Khaldūn

All that we have mentioned above is summarised as follows by ʿImān Abū Ḥamid al-Gḥazālī, may Allāh be pleased with him. The meaning of what he said is, “The Way {*aṭ-ṭarīq*} in its beginning is the struggle {*al-jāhadah*} against error through the eradication of blameworthy {*madḥmūm*} attributes {*ṣifāt*}. It is the severing of all attachments {*al-ʿalāʾiq*} and it is the proceeding with intense dedication {*al-himmah*} to Allāh Most High.

“When these ingredients are present, then Allāh handles all the affairs of His devoted slave {*ʿabdihi*} and is responsible for the illumination {*tanwīr*} of the heart with the light of knowledge {*al-ʿilm*}.

“When Allāh takes over the management of the affairs of His devoted slave, then the heart is flooded with Mercy {*ar-rahmah*} — light shines in the heart — the heart is expanded and the secret of the *malakūt*<sup>15</sup> is disclosed. The veils of vain deception {*hijābu-l-garah*} are removed from the heart by the kindness of Mercy {*bi-luṭfu-r-rahmah*} and within the heart there glows the reality of the Divine Sovereignty {*ḥqāʾiqu-l-ʿamūru-l-alhiyah*} and one is an ‘eye’ witness to the bestowals of the Mercy and Kindness of Allāh upon one’s being.

“This secret was disclosed to the Prophets {*al-ʿambyāʾ*} and Friends {*al-ʿawliyāʾ*}. Their hearts were flooded with light which came not from studying or from research or from reading books but rather in their abstinence {*az-zuhd*} from the world {*ad-dunyā*} and the annihilation {*at-tabrī*} of attachments.

“They journey to Allāh with the clear understanding that,

فَمَنْ كَانَ لِلَّهِ كَانَ لِلَّهِ لَهُ

FA-MAN KĀNA-LLĀHU KĀNA-LLĀHU LAHU

Who is for Allāh — Allāh is for him

The secret is contained in the Words of Allāh,

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ

FADḥKURUNĪ ʿADḥKURKUM

Remember Me — I remember you

{2:152}

“Demonstrations of the Presents {*an-nafaḥāt*} of the Mercy of Allāh are made manifest to the one who proceeds along this course. The traveller knows that he has no power to call them but must await the currents and zephyrs of that Divine Inspiration, as so also did the Prophets and Friends of Allāh.

“When the will {*al-ʿirādah*} has been corrected and the determination {*himmah*} is pure and the perseverance {*muwaḍḥabah*} is in its proper state, then the brilliant lustrance of the Truth shines in the heart and the veils {*hijāb*} are lifted by the hidden subtle kindness {*bi-luṭfī ḥafī*} of Allāh Most High and the Unknown {*al-ghayb*} is unclothed and one arrives to Certainty {*yaqīn*} at last.”

<sup>15</sup>see footnote 4



ʿIbn Khaldūn sums up the matter in this way, “This way of struggle {*al-mujāhadah*}, of isolation {*khilwah*} and remembrance {*dhikr*} is followed by the lifting of the veils of the perceptions {*al-huss*} and the observation {*al-ʿittlāʿ*} of the Cosmic Universes {*ʿawālim*} emanating from the command of Allāh which are hidden and veiled to the people who perceive solely through their senses. The Spirit {*ar-rūh*} is from among those Universes.

“The reason {*sabab*} for this observation or spiritual insight {*kashf*} is that when the Spirit departs from the outer perceptions {*al-hussu-dh-dhāhir*} and enters the realm of the inner {*al-bāṭin*}, the power of the senses is weakened and at the same time the power of the spirit is strengthened; until its authority {*sultān*} comes to prevail and ecstasy {*nashwah*} is regenerated {*tajddūd*}.

“The process is supported by the *dhikr*, which is the food {*qūt*} that nourishes the spirit until it reaches the point where one witnesses the hidden knowledge. The veils of the physical senses are lifted until the Essence {*adh-dhāt*} is present within the self {*an-nafs*}. At this point one is ready for the Lordly Benisons {*li-mawāhabbu-r-rabāniyah*}, the Knowledge from the Presence {*al-ʿulūmu-l-ladūni*}<sup>16</sup>, Divine Openings {*al-faṭḥu-l-ʿilahī*} as well as confirmation {*taḥqqīq*} of the Reality of the Higher Horizons {*al-ʿafaqu-l-ʿalā*} which is the Horizon or Sphere of the Angels {*al-ʿufuqu-l-malaāʾikah*}.

“These mystical insights occur with frequency to those who strive in the Way of Allāh. Such people realise the Reality of Being {*al-ḥaqāʾiqu-l-wujūd*} which others never realise. They also grasp and foresee events before they come to be and, in a certain sense, have dominion over lower creatures {*al-mawjūdātu-s-saflīyah*} who are at their disposal. The great ones among them, however, do not pay much heed to these insights nor to their dominion of the lower creatures. They never speak about anything which they are not ordered {*lam yuʿmirū*} to give news about and in truth they consider all of these things to be tests and refrain from exercising those abilities which are accorded to them.

“The companions {*aṣ-ṣaḥābah*}, Allāh be content with them, were like that in their own struggle and their share of wonders {*karāmāt*} was plentiful {*al-ḥadḥudh*} though they did not pay much attention to them. The excellence of Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUṭmān and ʿAlī, may Allāh be content with them, has been amply recorded and they, in turn, had their followers who were followed by the People of the Way whose qualities are documented in the *Risālah* of al-Qushayrī.”

Thus we can see from all that has been mentioned up until this point, that the Way we are describing is preeminently an ʿIslāmic approach and the means and the steps of the method are all derived from the precepts of ʿIslām as revealed by Allāh and manifest in the custom {*sunnah*} of His Messenger, our liege-lord Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh peace be upon him, as well as the behaviour and character of his companions, may Allāh be pleased with them all, and their followers and, indeed, the followers of those followers right up to the present day.

All of that is accepted to be part of the ʿIslāmic way of life including worship {*al-ʿibadah*}, remembrance {*adh-dhikr*}, will {*al-ʿirādah*}, patient persistence {*ar-riyadah*}, refinement of character {*al-ʿakhlāq*}, migration {*al-hijrah*} and flight {*al-firār*} to Allāh, intense struggle {*jihād*} in the Way of Allāh, periodic seclusion {*al-khilwah*}, the cutting off of worldly attachments {*al-ʿalāʾiq*}, the eradication of blameworthy {*madḥmūm*} attributes {*ṣifāt*}, and proceeding with intense dedication {*al-himmah*} as well as fear {*khawf*} and hope {*ʿamal*} of Allāh Most High.

<sup>16</sup> Knowledge directly imparted by Allāh through spiritual intuition. See Qurʾān 18:65

## • Fruits of the Way

To what does this Way lead? To what end does the Way contribute? If we follow this Way or system in consonance {*wafaqa*} with what Allāh has prescribed, what will be the result? What is the goal {*al-hadaf*} that the Ṣūfī sets out to reach {*wuṣūl*}?

To begin with we should look at this question in light of how the degree or level {*ad-darajah*} of people is assessed in ʿIslām. Allāh says,

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ

ʿINNA ʿAKRAMAKUM ʿINDA-LLĀHI ʿATQĀKUM

*Surely the most noble of you with Allāh is the most God-conscious*  
{49:13}

The path of *at-taqwah*<sup>17</sup>, in its height and in its breadth, is without limit. Consequently the grace or honour {*ʿakram*} which Allāh bestows upon people increases until such grace reaches levels which are unimaginable by the generality. There is a very well known Ḥadīth Qudsi<sup>18</sup> recorded as correct {*ṣaḥīḥ*} by the Muḥadith Abū ʿabdu-LLāh al-Bukḥārī and reported by Abī Hurayrah, may Allāh be content with him, who said, “The Messenger of Allāh, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said that he heard from his Lord, Glorious and Majestic,

« مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ ،  
وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا أَرْضَيْتُ عَلَيْهِ ،  
وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالْإِخْلَاقِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ ،  
فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ ،  
وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا ،  
وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا ،  
وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَا أُعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَنْ أَسْتَعَاذَ بِهِ لِأَعِيزَنَّهُ

“Who is an enemy to my friend I declare war on him,  
My worshipper does not come close to me by anything more loved by Me than My Dues.  
And my worshipper does not cease to draw near to Me by voluntary acts until I love him,  
And when I love him I become the Hearing by which he hears  
And the Seeing by which he sees — And the Hand by which he strikes,  
And the Feet by which he strides.  
And if he asks of Me anything I shall give it and if he seeks My shelter I shall save him.”

The Friends of Allāh {*al-ʿawliyāʾ-llāh*} have been classified into categories according to the degree of their nearness {*qurb*} to Allāh even though, from another perspective, they are all near to Him and enjoy His Contentment {*riḍān*} and His Acceptance {*riḍwān*}.

<sup>17</sup> see footnote 8

<sup>18</sup> Ḥadīth Qudsi are divinely inspired utterances on the tongue of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. As such they are ranked in canonical importance just below the Revelation contained in the Qurʾān.

Allāh says,

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ  
فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ  
النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ  
وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا  
ذَلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا ۝

WA MA'NY-YUṬĪ'I-LLĀHA-R-RASŪLA  
FA-'UWLĀĀĀ'IKA MA'A-L-LADĪNĀ 'AN'AMA-LLĀHU 'ALAYHI-MMINA-N  
-NABIYYĪNĀ WA ṢIDḌĪQĪNĀ WA-SH-SHUHADAĀ'Ī WA-Ṣ-ṢĀLIḤĪN :  
WA ḤUSNA 'UWLĀĀĀ'IKA RAFĪQĀ ▪  
DĤĀLIKA-L-FADLU MINA-LLĀH ; WA KAFĀ BI-LLĀHI 'ALĪMĀ ▪ ..

*And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger  
they are with those to whom Allāh has shown favour  
the Prophets, the Veracious, the Martyrs, and the Wholly Good;  
and they are the best of company.  
Such is the Bounty of Allāh and Allāh suffices as Knower.  
{4:69-70}*

If we were thus to attempt to set an order of hierarchy we would begin with the Messengers {*ar-rusul*}, who are those who brought a Law for the people, followed by the Prophets {*an-nabiyyīn*} who, under orders of Allāh, sought to rectify their people and direct them on the path to Allāh, by first of all giving witness to the Oneness of Allāh and then through spreading the good news {*mubashīrah*} of the Existence of Allāh and through warning {*naḍḥarah*} them, and by acting as lights of guidance {*munīrah*} to the particular people to whom they were sent.

After the Prophets, upon all of whom be peace<sup>19</sup>, and we do not discriminate between them, come the Veracious {*aṣ-ṣiddiqīn*}, who are those who never in their lives deviated from the truth inwardly or outwardly. Following them there are the Martyrs {*aṣh-shuhadā'*}, who are those who with their very lives bore witness {*shahadah*} to the Truth of the Singular Existence which is Allāh. They are in turn followed by the Wholly Good {*aṣ-ṣaliḥīn*}, those people whose very essence is goodness and whose every act brings good.

Beyond these there are others mentioned in different chapters of the Qur'ān, such as Those Who are Brought Near {*al-muqarrabīn*}, whose life is lived within the direct sphere of Allāh. After them come Those Who Go Before {*as-sābiqūn*}, who are to be found at the forefront of every blessed endeavour, followed by the People of the Right Hand {*'aṣhābi-l-yamīn*} whose effort is always put to the good.

Among others mentioned by Allāh are the Innocent {*al-'abrār*}, in whose good all people have a share, as well as those who oppress the appetitive self {*dḥālim li-nafsahu*}, the resolutely frugal {*al-*

<sup>19</sup> According to tradition they number 124,000 and were sent to every people and every nation, peace be upon them all.

*muqtaṣadah* } who take only what they need and no more, as well as those who proceed all in their goodness by the permission of Allāh {*sābiq bi-l-khayr bi-ʿidhni-llāh*}.

The difference of degree between all of these is their taqwah. Looked at negatively we can say that hierarchy is derived first of all from the fear of Allāh, for it is said that the fear of Allāh is the beginning of all Wisdom {*al-ḥikmah*}. Looked at neutrally this is their safe guarding of their very selves {*nafs*} at every level in order to preserve those same selves for Allāh. Looked at positively this taqwah is God-consciousness, and we may say that to the degree that the being is conscious of Allāh, that is their degree with Allāh, and that consciousness is the awareness of the integral oneness {*at-tawḥīd*} of Allāh and absolute adamant refusal, at all and every level, to add or subtract from that Absolute Oneness. The summit {*qimmah*} of this tawḥīd is to declare, as Allāh has, that,

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
وَأَلَمَلَكْتُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ  
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ▪

SHAHIDA-LLĀHU ʿANNAHŪ LĀĀ ʿILĀHA ʿILLA HUWA  
WA-L-MAKĀĀʾIKATU WA-L-ʾULŪ-L-ʿILMI QĀĀʾIMĀM BI-L-QISTā;  
LĀĀ ʿILĀHA ʿILLA HUWA-L-ʿAZĪZU-L-ḤAKĪM ▪

*Allāh witnesses of Himself that there is no deity save He  
and the angels and the people of knowledge {do also so witness} — Equity prevails  
There is no deity save He, the Almighty, the Wise  
{3:18}*

This testimony — this witnessing {*shahadah*} of the fundamental Oneness {*tawḥīd*} — is not simply a phrase that falls casually off the tongue like any phrase. It is not a mere utterance; rather it is an event — indeed it is a Covenant {*mithāq*} — between the One who is Witnessed and the one who witnesses, whilst simultaneously it is the realisation that in the first place it is Allāh who is the Witness of His Own Being. For one to truly bear witness, to really utter the *shahadah*, it is necessary that the person be an eye witness, to truly ‘see’ the Reality of That which is witnessed.

Perhaps the terrible sublimity of this event, this covenant, this ‘eye’ witnessing caused the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, to say, {as reported in Tabarani from Abu Darr}

مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ذَكَرَ الْجَنَّةَ

MAN QĀLA LĀĀ ʿILĀHA ʿILLA-LLĀH DHAKALA-L-JANNAH

*Who ever says ‘There is no deity save Allāh’ enters the Garden*

The people of knowledge {*ʾulū-l-ʿilm*} are those who are chosen from humanity and those who, by their witnessing of Reality, reach the summit of tawḥīd and are endowed with the most exalted Grace.



Their testimony, in consonance with that of Allāh and His Angels, is the assertion of the Reality of the integral oneness, which is both the goal of the religious impulse and the essence of the Message {ar-salah} brought, and attested to, by all of the Prophets, upon whom be peace.

This goal is the real objective which Ṣūfis seek to arrive at by all the means at their disposal. It is their hope and the realisation for which they seek day and night. It is that which causes them to:

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَ طَمَعًا  
يُنْفِقُونَ وَ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ

TATAJĀFĀ JUNŪBUHUM ʿANI-L-MADĀJĪʿI TADʿŪNA RABBAHUM  
KĥŌWFAÑW-WA ṬAMA ʿŊY-YUÑFIQŪNA WA MIMMĀ RAZAQĀNAHUM

*forsake their beds and cry to their Lord in fear and hope  
and spend from what We have bestowed upon them.*

{32:16}

The objective of the Ṣūfī is thus the very same goal that is sought within ʿIslām. It is *the* witnessing. We may perhaps be excused by those who know better for reminding our readers that it is this witnessing, this shahadah, which is also the first step in entering into the Way of ʿIslām.

Thus, in spite of what the orientlists assert by their words and what the heterodox assert by their actions {or lack of them}, the aim of Taṣawwuf is one and the same as the aim of ʿIslām. They are root branch, flower and perfume each to the other without division or disruption.

The Way is the purification of the soulself {an-naḥs} from everything other than Allāh in order that one may come to know that truly there is not any thing, neither diety nor progenitor nor offspring, save Allāh, sublimely One then and now and for evermore. This is Ṣūfism {at-taṣawwuf}, this is the Way {aṭ-ṭarīqah}, this is the Goal {al-ghāyah}.

It is the surrender of the limited to the Limitless which is the voluntary self-surrender {ʿistislām} to Allāh which brings the self health and well being {sālīm}, unimpaired and unblemished {musallam} peace {as-salām} and wholeness {salīm}, which is the ʿIslām of the true Muslim.

### • The Definition of Ṣūfism

Now we shall let the Ṣūfis speak for themselves and so let them define what Ṣūfis are and Ṣūfism is in part or in whole.

“A Ṣūfī is one whose heart has been purified.”<sup>20</sup> [illumination {tazkiyah} of the soulself {an-naḥs}].

“Ṣūfism is to act politely.”<sup>21</sup> [the part of the Way dealing with refinement of character {al-ʿakhlāq}]

“A Ṣūfī is one whose Lord and Sustainer has purified {ṣaḥī} his heart and filled it with light. He enters into the wellspring of bliss {ʿaynu-l-ladhdhah} by the Remembrance {dhikr} of Allāh.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Sīdī Bishr al-Hāfi {d. 227 Hijri}, may Allāh sanctify his secret

<sup>21</sup> Sīdī Abū Ḥaḥṣ al-Haddād {d. 265 H}, may Allāh sanctify his secret

<sup>22</sup> Sīdī Sāid al-Kharāz {d. 297 H}, may Allāh sanctify his secret



“Sūfism is when Allāh singles you out {*yakhṭaṣak*} for purity {*bi-ṣafāʾ*} — the purity of the one who is purified of everything else other than Allāh. That is to be a Ṣūfī.”<sup>23</sup>

ʿImām al-Junayd has given us many definitions of Sūfism and every one of them explains a facet of Sūfism either as a method or as an end. He gave more than ten definitions. The following, which we have chosen, illustrate many, but not all, of these facets of Sūfism. He says,

• “Sūfism is the purification of hearts so that they become safe from the natural disposition of behaviour {*ʿakḥlaqu-t-tabīʿah*}.

“Sūfism is the extinction {*ʿakḥmid*} of personal attributes {*ṣifātu-l-bashariyah*}.

“Sūfism is the putting aside of the impetuosity {*nazawāt*} of the self {*an-nafs*}.

“Sūfism is the dwelling {*manāzilah*} in the attributes of the Spirit {*aṣ-ṣafātu-r-ruḥiyyah*}.

“Sūfism is to adhere to the Science of Reality {*ʿulmu-l-ḥaqīqah*}.

“Sūfism is to perpetually work {*ʿamal*} for the good {*al-khayr*}.

“Sūfism is rendering sincere counsel {*an-naṣḥa-l-khālīṣ*} to all in the community.

“Sūfism is perfect sincerity {*al-ʾikhlās*} in deference {*murāʿah*} to Reality.

and finally, “Sūfism is to follow the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, in regard to the Law {*aṣḥ-ṣharīʿah*}.”

There are also definitions which are connected to the goal of Sūfism. Abū Bakr aṣḥ-Shiblī {d. 332 H}, may Allāh sanctify his secret, was once asked, “What is the beginning of this matter and what is its end?” He replied, “Its beginning is in the knowledge of Allāh {*maʿarifah*} and its end is in the Singularity of Allāh {*at-tawḥīd*}.” He also said, “Taṣawwuf is control of the faculties and observance of the breath.”

Still considering all of these definitions, we find that they are incomplete. Their value rests in their attempt to explain one facet or the other of Sūfism. But even if they succeed in explaining that particular facet, yet they do fail in delimiting the whole. If they explain a method they do not explain the end, and even when they explain the goal still they do not succeed in providing us with a full picture of Sūfism as it has been known by those in the past and as it is known by those in the present.

All Ṣūfis — and historians of taṣawwuf — agree that Sūfism is both a way and a reality, which is to say that it is both Ṭarīqah and Ḥaqīqah and also to say that it is both travelling and deliverance {*sulūk wa tanjīyah*}. Indeed Ṣūfis equate the unity of the Way and Goal to a circle and its centre.

Shaykh ʿAbdu-l-Wāḥid Yahyā {d 1375 H}, may Allāh sanctify his secret, said, “The ṭarīqah is the line {*al-khaṭ*} that leads from the circumference of the circle {*ad-dāʾirah*} to its centre {*al-markaz*}. Each point on the circumference is the beginning of a line and all the innumerable lines lead to the ultimate point of termination, which is the centre. They are all ‘paths’ {*turuq*}. They differ according to the differences of human nature {*al-ʾikhtilāfu-tabāʿu-l-bashariyah*} and that is why it is said that ‘the Paths leading to Allāh are equal to the number of Adam’s children.’ Whatever the differences may be, there is but one end, for there is only One Centre and One Reality.”

<sup>23</sup> Sidi al-ʿImān al-Junayd al-Baghdādī {d. 297 H.}, may Allāh sanctify his secret

The differences at the beginning vanish in the End in consonance with the vanishing {*tazūl*} of personal attributes {*ṣifātu-l-baṣariyah*}, for as the traveller {*as-sālik*} moves to the higher planes {*darajātu-l-ʿaliyā*} these attributes begin to vanish or are transmuted {*hawwal ṭabʿah*}.

In truth these attributes are both our prison {*as-sijn*} and our jailers {*sajjān*}. The final release from prison is the dwelling {*manzil*} which is called 'Extinction' {*al-fanāʾ*} and after that there remains only the Lordly Attributes {*ṣifātu-r-rabāniyah*}. This is the dwelling place — the station — which is called 'Remaining' {*al-baqāʾ*}.

The Way {*aṭ-ṭariqah*} and the Reality {*al-ḥaqīqah*} are inextricably joined with one another and together they are what is called *taṣawwuf* or *Ṣūfism*. This is not — contrary to what some scholars, both eastern and western, and others would have you believe — a special school {*madḥaban khaṣan*} but rather it is the absolute reality {*al-ḥaqīqatu-l-muṭlaqah*}.

### • The Definition of Ṣūfism as we see it

As an end to what has already been said, we say that there is a definition which we feel covers all the facets of Ṣūfism. It is the one given by al-Kitannī, who said,

Ṣūfism: Purity and Direct Eye Witnessing

{*at-taṣawwuf: ṣafāʾa wa muṣḥadah*}.

We say with all certainty {*yaqīn*} springing from everything that had preceded this with a certainty that closes the door in front of all of those who raise up illusions {*ʿawḥām*} about Ṣūfis and Ṣūfism, that the Ṣūfī method is the practical means of realizing what Allāh meant when He said,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ▪

QADĀ ʾAFLAḤA MAN ZAKKĀHĀ ▪

*Successful is the one who purifies it.*

{91:9}

It in this instance is the soulself {*an-nafs*}, for the purification of the soulself rests in cleansing and clarifying, and *taṣawwuf* is that process whereby the soulself reaches clarity and purity. Allāh says,

قُلْ إِن صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ▪  
لَا شَرِكَ لَهُ ▪ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ▪

QUL ʾINNA ṢALĀTĪ WA NUSUKĪ WA MAḤYĀYA WA MAMĀTĪ LI-LLĀHI

RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪNA ▪ LĀ SHARIKA LAH :

WA BI-DĤĀLIKA ʾUMIRTU WA ʾANA ʾAWWALU-L-MUSLIMĪN ▪

*Say truly my praye,r my acts of worship, my life and my death are for Allāh {alone},  
the Sustaining Lord of all the Worlds, Who has no partner,  
and by this I have been ordered and I am foremost among those who have surrendered.*

{6:162-3}

As for the end, it is the attainment of that direct eye witnessing {*ash-shahadah*} of which Allāh says,

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ  
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

ShAHIDA-LLĀHU ʾANNAHU LĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLA HUWA  
WA-L-MALĀĀʾIKATU WA-L-ʾULŪ-L-ʿILMI QĀĀʾIMĀM BI-L-QISTĀ ;  
LĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLA HUWA-L-ʿAZĪZU-L-ḤAKĪM ▪

*Allāh witnesses of Himself that there is no deity save He  
and the angels and the people of knowledge {do also so witness}— Equity prevails  
There is no deity save He, the Almighty, the Wise  
{3:18}*

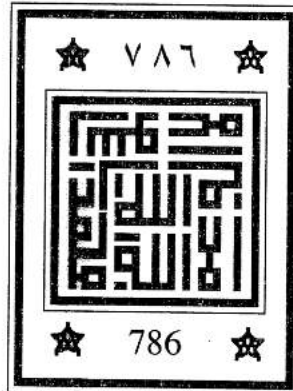


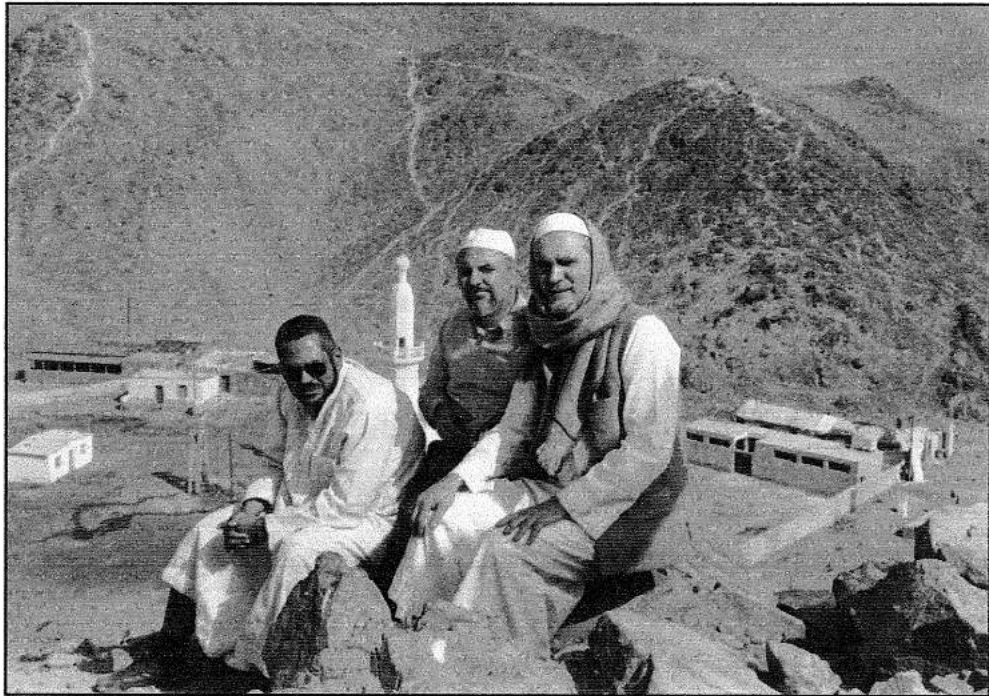
Our goal is our starting point:

I bear witness there is no deity save Allāh

ʾashadu ʾal-lā ʾilāha ʾilla-llāh

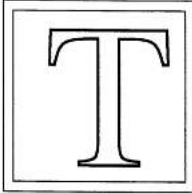
أَشَدُّ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ





*On the hill at Humaythira during the annual visit, 1984*

## THE LIFE OF SHAYKH 'ABŪ-L-'ABBĀS AL-MURSĪ



here is a veridical dream {*ru'yah*} that is both symbolic and subtle. It also makes explicitly clear for us the relationship that existed between the Knower by Allāh, {*al-'arif bi-llāh*} Sīdī Shaykh Abū-l-'Abbās al-Mursī and his Shaykh and ours, Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhulī, may Allāh have Mercy upon them, sanctify their secret, and perfume their resting place.

Shaykh Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh as-Sakandarī, may Allāh have mercy on him, sanctify his secret and perfume his resting place, relates in *The Bestowal of Subtle Kindnesses* {*Laṭā'if al-Minan*} the following story:

“Some of my friends told me that one from amongst the People of Knowledge and Goodness {*'ahli-l-'ilm wa-l-khayr*} saw whilst in the dream state that he was in a small graveyard {*qarafatu-ṣ-ṣaghīr*} in which were gathered a number of people who were looking into the sky. One of them said, ‘Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhulī is descending from the sky and Shaykh Abū-l-'Abbās al-Mursī is preparing to receive him.

“I saw Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan coming down dressed in a pure white garment and when Shaykh Abū-l-'Abbās saw him he set his feet firmly on the earth in order to prepare for the Shaykh's descent upon him. Then Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan came down upon Abū-l-'Abbās and entered first through his head and then disappeared into him — then I awoke.”

This is a beautiful symbol {*ar-ramzi-l-jamīl*} of the relationship that existed between these two great masters and it is totally indicative of the union that existed between them in method, thought and behaviour {*fi-l-manḥah wa-f-fikr s-sulūk*}. In truth they both trod the same path. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in this context, “{There is a story that} circulated among the friends of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan and others that one day in Cairo {al-Qāhirah, may Allāh preserve it and those who dwell within it} at the house of Zakī as-Sirāj the book of an-Niffarī,<sup>1</sup> *The Stations and Communications* {*al-Mawāqif wa al-Mukhtabat*}, was being read. The Shaykh looked around and said, ‘Where is Abū-l-'Abbās?’ When he came to him Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan said, “Speak my son. Speak and may the Blessed Grace of Allāh be in you. You will never be silent from this day forth.”

Shaykh Abū-l-'Abbās commented on this saying, “It was then I was given the tongue of the Shaykh.”

Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, Allāh be content with him, once said to Abū-l-'Abbās, “Oh Abū-l-'Abbās, I became a companion to you<sup>2</sup> in order that you might become me and that I might become you.”

Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan did not die when he died but rather he vanished into Shaykh Abū-l-'Abbās and gave him his tongue and — he was him — and remained with him. Sīdī Abū-l-'Abbās was an extension {*'imṭadāda*} of Sīdī Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan who was the first ring or link {*ḥalaqātu-l-'awwāl*} in a chain {*silsilah*} which in time has become a Way {*ṭarīqah*} and a School {*madrasah*}. This School — the Madrastu-sh-Shādhḍhulī — was founded with great vigour by Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan.

The links in that chain — the representatives {*khulafā'*} across time and space of Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan include many great masters, but the first of them and the first representative {*khalifah*} of Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan was, and is, Shaykh

<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Muḥammad bin 'Abdu-l-Jabbār an-Niffarī {see *Origins*, Book One, page 40}

<sup>2</sup> *ṣahibatuka* = {lit} I companioned you



Abū-l-ʿAbbās. From that time until this time many have taken this Way and entered in to the School and followed its program {*manhaj*} of guidance {*hudā*} and insight {*baṣīrah*}.

Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan loved Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās as one loves one's own self or the image of one's self in a faithful and sincere son, and greatly esteemed him. On more than one occasion, the Shāykh praised his degree of spiritual realisation. One of these times he said, "That is Abū-l-ʿAbbās. The moment, the instant he pierced {*naḥḍha*} through to Allāh all his veils {*al-hijāb*} came down. If he ever asks to be veiled again he will never {get his request}." Another time he said to Shāykh Zakīd-d-dīn al-Aswani, "Zakī! Stick to Abū-l-ʿAbbās. By Allāh! There is no walī who is not known, by the Grace of Allāh, to Abū-l-ʿAbbās. Zakī, Abū-l-ʿAbbās is a perfected man {*al-insānu-l-kāmil*}."

On yet another occasion our Shāykh, may Allāh bless him, was heard to say, "Abū-l-ʿAbbās knows the paths of the Heavens better than he knows the paths here upon the earth." Indeed not only did our Shāykh praise him but he praised him to others and wanted all to know the high spiritual state of Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās. Shāykh Madī bin Sulṭān said, "Once there was a discussion between Abū-l-ʿAbbās and myself and the Shāykh overheard us and said, 'Mādī! Stick to politeness with Abū-l-ʿAbbās. By Allāh he knows the lanes of the heavens better than you know the lanes of Alexandria {*al-ʿIskandariyah*, may Allāh protect it and those who dwell within it}."

Once Shāykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās explained {*yāfsir*} these Words of Allāh sūrah *at-Tawbah*:

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ  
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبُ فَرِيقٍ مِنْهُمْ  
ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ  
وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّى إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ  
وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنْ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ  
ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

LAQA-TTĀBA-LLĀHU ʿALA-N-NABBIYYI WA-L-MUHĀJIRĪN WA-L-ʾANṢĀRI-L-  
LADĤĪNA-T-TABAʿŪHU FĪ SĀʿATI-L-ʿUSRATI MIM-BAʿDI MĀ KĀDA YAZĪĠĤU QULŪBU  
FARĪQIM-MINHUM TĤUMMA TĀBA ʿALAYHIM : ʾINNAHŪ BIHIM RAʾUFU-R-RAḤIM  
WA ʿALA-TĤ-TĤALĀTHĤATA-L-LADĤĪNA KĤULLIFŪ ḤATTĀĀ ʾIDĤĀ ḌĀFAT ʿALAYHIMU-L-ʾARḌU  
BIMĀ RAHUBAT WA ḌĀFAT ʿALAYHIM ʾANFUSUHUM WA ḌĤANUŪŪ ʾAL-LĀ MALJAʾA MINA-  
LLĀHI ʾILLĀĀ ʾILAYH : TĤUMMĀ TĀBA ʿALAYHIM LI-YATŪBŪ : ʾINNA-LLĀHA HUWA-T-  
TAWĀBU-R-RAḤIM

Allāh has turned towards the Prophet and the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed him in the hour of difficulty — after the hearts of some of them had almost turned aside then He turned towards them. Truly He is Gentle and Bestows Mercy upon them. And to the three who were left behind until the earth — despite its vastness — became tight for them and their own souls became tight for them and they thought there was no refuge from Allāh {other than} to turn to Him, then He turned towards them. Surely Allāh is the Returner, the Mercy Full.

{9:117-18}

He said, on the basis of what Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan had said, that “Allāh first mentioned the *tawbak*<sup>3</sup> of those who did not sin in order that those who did sin would not be frightened. Thus He first mentioned the Prophet, upon whom be the blessings of Allāh and peace, then the Emigrants {*al-muhājirīn*} and then the Helpers {*al-anṣār*}<sup>4</sup> who did not sin and only then did he mention the three<sup>5</sup> who had turned aside. Allāh mentioned those who did not sin first in order to appease the sinners. Had Allāh first mentioned those who held back from going to fight in the battle their hearts would have suffocated.”

Sīdī Abū-l-'Abbās talked about his Shaykh incessantly. He was always saying, “The Shaykh said...the Shaykh said...the Shaykh said...” until once someone asked him, “Why have I never heard you say something of your own?” Sīdī Abū-l-'Abbās said, “If I were to say with every breath, ‘Allāh most High said...Allāh most High said...Allāh most High said...’ I could and if I were to say with every breath, ‘The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said...The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said...The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said...’ I could and if I were to say with every breath, ‘I say...I say...I say...’ I could. Instead I say, ‘The Shaykh said’ and leave myself out of it in all politeness.”

The author of The Secret Pearls {*Durratu-l-'Asrār*}<sup>6</sup> writes, “Among letters written in his own hand there was one I saw that he had written from al-'Iskandariyah to one of his friends in Tunis. At the end of it he wrote, ‘...I am keeping company with one of the leading Ṣidiqīn<sup>7</sup> and I have received a secret from him which is not given except to one after one. The explanation is lengthy but leave it to say that I am proud {*'aftakhr*} to belong to his lineage {*nasab*}, may Allāh be contented with him. His name is Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhidhūlī. There is no one who has ever kept his company save that Allāh opens him {*fataḥa-llāhu lahu*} in two or three days. If he is not renewed {*yajida*} in three days he is either from among the liars {*kadhāb*} or an honest one who lost the Way. The proof {*dalil*} for this can be deduced from {the words of Allāh in} the Qur'ān.

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْزًا

QĀLA RABBI-J-'AL LIĪ 'ĀYAH :

QĀLA 'ĀYATUKA'ALLĀ TUKALLIMA-N-NASA THĀLĀTHĀTA 'ĀYYAMIN 'ILLA RAMZĀ

He said, 'My Lord, give me a Sign'

He said, 'Your Sign shall be that you shall not speak to anyone for three days other than by symbols.'  
{3:41}

<sup>3</sup> tāba = to turn, to repent, to be penitent. When it is said of Allāh that He Returns or is the Returner it carries the meaning that He, in His Infinite Mercy and Compassion, restores the soulself {*nafs*} to His Grace.

<sup>4</sup>The Emigrants {*al-muhājirīn*}, Allāh be pleased with them, are those Companions of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, who migrated from Makkah to Madinah {may Allāh preserve them and those who dwell within them} whilst the Helpers {*al-anṣār*}, may Allāh be pleased with them, were those Companions who originally dwelt in Madinah {or Yathrib as it was originally called} who offered the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, refuge from the ill-treatment that he had received from his kinsfolk in Makkah and acceptance of his prophetic mission..

<sup>5</sup> the three {*ath-thalāthata*}. According to many sources {at-Ṭabṛī, ibn Kathīr etc} this refers to three people: Ka'b ibn Mālik, Marārah ibn ar-Rabi' and Hilāl ibn Umayyah {all three of whom who were from among the Helpers}, who avoided taking part on a military campaign on Tabūk and then repented, after which this verse was revealed. Muḥammad Assad, may Allāh have mercy on him, advances an interesting further explanation suggesting that the three refers to three groups of erring believers: 1} Those who gave equivocal reasons for their not taking part {9:43-46}, 2} those who absented themselves without permission and then repented {9:102-105} and 3} those who deferred {9:106} and then repented.

<sup>6</sup>Ibn Sabbagh, *Durrat al-'Asrār wa Tuhfat al-'Abrār*, Cairo 1989, Maṭbat'ut-s-Sa'adah. Also recently published {1993} by SUNY Press {NY, USA} in an English translation by Dr. Elemer Douglas.

<sup>7</sup>ṣadaqa = to speak the truth, be sincere, to tell the truth, to prove to be true; to fulfill one's promise; to be trustworthy; to treat as a friend; to befriend; to confirm

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās said, “The Shāykh said, ‘If you have a request from Allāh mention my name to Him.’ By Allāh! I never mentioned his name in a time of hardship without finding it passing away nor was I ever in a difficult situation other than I found a solution for it. Oh you — my brother — if you ever find yourself in hardship mention his name to Allāh. I have given you this advice and Allāh knows it. Peace be with you.”

He was deeply grateful to his Shāykh and sincere in following his instructions and directives which he, in turn, circulated widely both out of gratitude to the Shāykh and because he knew their true value.

All we have written in these first few pages on Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās is by way of explaining the *ruʿyah* which, in view of its clarity, does not really need an explanation. We might say that Abū-l-Ḥasan was an extension of Abū-l-ʿAbbās in the past and that Abū-l-ʿAbbās was an extension of Abū-l-Ḥasan after he relocated-*{tanaqala}*<sup>8</sup>.

What is interesting about the *ruʿyah* is that it shows that when Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās saw Shāykh Abū-l-Ḥasan descending from out of the sky, he firmly rooted *{thabata}* his feet to the earth in order to prepare to receive the Shāykh. This indicates that the attempt on the part of Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās to be one for one with aṣḥ-Shādhūlī, Allāh be content with both of them, was not at all easy and required a great effort on his part, symbolised by his rooting his feet to the earth. It also gives us some idea of the greatness of Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan’s station *{maqām}* that such an effort was needed on the part of Abū-l-ʿAbbās to contain it.

Who was this Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī? How did he come to be in touch with Shāykh Abū-l-Ḥasan?



If we seek to write about the personal life of Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās we find hardly any traces. Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās was neither interested in talking about himself nor in speaking of his family; neither did he leave an autobiography nor is there a history of his life. His secret remains hidden.

Rather than to praise his own deeds, he annihilated *{fanā}* himself in Shāykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, leaving him without either time or cause to speak of himself. After the death of his Shāykh, both his time and his energy were absorbed in the Calling *{ad-daʿwah}* of people to Allāh, praised be He, which again left him without time to speak of himself.

His annihilation — first in his Shāykh and later in the Call — were in themselves annihilation in Allāh *{fanā fī-llāh}* and in His Messenger *{fanā fī-r-rasūl}*, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. This annihilation was an annihilation both in love and in his effort to please them. Anyone who found their ‘self’ in his place *{manzil}* would equally be without interest in propagation of the myth of their self.

The general tendency among all the wholly perfected ones *{aṣ-saliḥīn}*, may Allāh be content with them, in their travel to Allāh is the abandonment of the the limited and limiting self *{nafs}* and its dissolution in the greater task which is the propagation of the Message *{ar-risalah}*. The individual soul *{nafs}* is dissolved in the work of propagating that Message of Spiritual Liberation especially in the ways in which that Message can be practically realised in the life of the people.

<sup>8</sup>naqala = to move from its place, move away, displace; to remove, transfer, translocate, transplant. In this case it is used similarly to the English, “he passed away.”

Their exemplar in this is the Prophet and Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, who projected all of his light on the Message itself and was little concerned in circulating news of himself, except insofar as it shed light on the Message or aided in the communicating of the Message.

Ṣūfīs, in general, refrain from speaking about themselves, again excepting when such speech, usually in the form of stories of one's experiences on the Way, help to shed light on the Way of others. Even in this case their speech will always in the end point to Allāh, the Message and the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and never themselves.

aṣḥ-Ṣhiblī<sup>9</sup>, may Allāh sanctify his secret, was asked once why Ṣūfism had a name and he replied that was because "some traces {of themselves} remained in the Ṣūfīs, for had they fully annihilated their selves there would have been nothing called Ṣūfism."

So it is that Ṣūfīs seek to annihilate themselves; to disappear and finally erase their names as well as their selves. They do this that they might cease to live within the constricting prison of their 'being' and instead find being in unlimited Being by living annihilated in and for Allāh, His Cause and His Way.

Returning to Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās, we can say that the 'historical' accounts reveal that he was born in al-Andalūs in the town of Mursia {Murcia} in the Year of the Flight Six Hundred and Sixteen {1219 M}. He was a desendent of the Helper<sup>10</sup> {al-ʿansār}, Saʿd Ibn ʿIbādah, the Shaykh of the Tribe of Khazraj, one of the two tribes of Yathrib which later became the Illuminated City {al-Madinah al-Munawwarah} of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, who said of the Helpers, "Loving them is a sign of faith."

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās grew up in Murcia where his father was a trader.{at-taijārah} and it would appear — from what little we know — that his father was a prosperous, for he was able to employ a special tutor to teach his son, our Shaykh, Qurʾān and ʿIslāmīc Jurisprudence {fiqh}. Abū-l-ʿAbbās said of this time,

"When I was young I went to my tutor {muʿaddib} one day when a man entered and said, 'A ṣūfī does not blacken anything white.' I said, 'The matter is not what you think it to be. The ṣūfī does not blacken his paper by impoliteness.'<sup>11</sup>

This story perhaps gives some idea of his brightness and understanding, which is usually or often lacking in children of that age. It also shows that early on he already had a grasp of taqwah.<sup>12</sup>

The raising up of Abū-l-ʿAbbās on the Way of Rightousness and God-Consciousness was the task of this tutor who, in addition to Qurʾān and Fiqh, also taught him Wholeness {aṣ-ṣalāḥ}, often times more mundanely translated as Probity, Ethics or Morality. Abū-l-ʿAbbās tells a story of this teacher:

"Once, when I was still quite young, there was a shadow play {kḥayālu-s-satār} being presented near my home and I went to see it. "The next day I went to my tutor, who was also a wālī, and when he saw me he sang the following line, 'Oh you who wonder at the shadow play of imagination. If you look closely you will find it to be illusion '"

<sup>9</sup>Abū Bakr aṣḥ-Ṣhiblī {d.329H-945m}

<sup>10</sup> see footnote 4 page 27

<sup>11</sup> This is a very elaborate play {not really translatable into English} on the word ʿadab from the aduba + to be well bred, well-mannered, cultured, urbane, refined etc. A tutor is called a muʿaddib, for one of his tasks is to instill courtesy and refinement in the student, which is to bring the student to the state of being muʿadda. The word ʿadab itself is also taken to be a prime distinguishing characteristic of a ṣūfī, in its true sense that a ṣūfī is polite with Allāh first of all and then with the entire creation — the best of whom is the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and then with one's first teacher, which is one's mother, of whom the Prophet and one's Shaykh is intimately realted.

<sup>12</sup> see footnote 8 page 7



In his later youth — when he had become independent in his reading and learning — he began to assist his father in business. He was, according to accounts, an honest trader {*at-tājiru-s-sadûq*}, but beyond that we know nothing about this stage of his life until the year 640 Hijrī{circa 1242 M}.

In that year his father prepared to take his family on pilgrimage {*al-hajj*} to the Ancient House {*baytu-l-‘atîq*} in Makkah al-Mukarramah {may Allah preserve it and those within it}. The first leg of this great voyage required that the family set sail from the shores of al-Andalus across the great midEarth Sea {Mediterranean}, and in the course of this journey, in accord with the Will of Allāh {*‘iradatu-llāh*} a violent storm came up and the whole family was shipwrecked off the coast of North Africa near the city of Bunah {Bonê}. His father and mother, may Allah have mercy upon them, were drowned but he and his brother, Muḥammad, were saved and made their way by land to Tunis.

Muḥammad, following perhaps in the footsteps of his father, became involved in trading, but Ahmad<sup>13</sup> seemed to have no such desire as he, in turn, followed in the way of his tutor, the Wālī of Allāh, and wished to study Qur’ān and plunge into its lights. He stayed in the zāwiyah<sup>14</sup> of Muḥriz bin Kḥalaf and taught reading, writing, the basics of the dīn and the various Qur’ānic sciences.

Divine Decree {*al-muqādir*} had brought him from Mursi to Tunis in order that he might become the second representative {*kḥalifa*’} of the Shādhḡulī Way and a great Quṭb among the ‘Aqtāb<sup>15</sup>, the extension in time and space of his Shaykh and a remarkable Caller {*dā‘in*} to the Way of Allāh.

Sidi Abu-l-‘Abbas relates how he first came into contact with his shaykh in the following story:

“When i first came to Tunis from Mursi I was still a young man. I heard of Shaykh Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shādhḡulī from a man who suggested that we should go to see him. I told him that I could not until I had made the prayer of Consultation {*al-‘istikḥiru-llāh*}.

“That night whilst I slept I saw a *ru‘yah* in which I was climbing to the top of a mountain. When I reached the summit I saw there a man dressed in a green cloak {*burnus akḡar*}. He was sitting and there was another man seated upon his right and another upon his left<sup>16</sup>.

”He saw me and he said, ‘I have found the Khalifah of the Time {*az-zamān*}’. Then I awoke.

“When I had completed my morning devotions {*ṣalātu-s-subḡ*} the man who had invited me to visit the Shaykh came to me. Together we walked to the Shaykh and I found him exactly as I had seen him in my ru‘yah. I was astonished. When he saw me he said, ‘I have found the Kḥalifah of the Time {*az-zamān*}. What is your name?’

<sup>13</sup> The given name of Sidi Abū-l-‘Abbās

<sup>14</sup> zāwiyah = {lit} a corner. Refers to a small masjid, often with a kutāb, which is a school for teaching Qur’ān, attached. in north Africa may also refer to the central meeting place for a local branch of a Ṣūfī order.

<sup>15</sup> Quṭb = pole, pivot, the centre upon which things turn. The highest office of the {mostly}hidden spiritual hierarchy who are the true kḥulafa’ of Allāh upon the earth, may Allāh sanctify their secret. They are variously said to number three hundred and sixty {named on p.93 para.3 of *Orisons*} or sometimes only forty. The Quṭb may also be understood to be the primary Shaykh of a particular sufi order at a certain time and can also be taken, on perhaps a more intimate level, to be one’s own Shaykh. There is a certain confusion that often seems to evince itself among new muridun or adherents of any order who, of course, believe their particular Shaykh to be *the* Quṭb. This is of course simply a lack of discrimination and a confusion of levels which is usually clarified by the Shaykh or rectified after some years on the Way.

<sup>16</sup> It is usual for the Quṭb to have one man on his right and another on his left. For a thorough discussion of the subject of the Quṭb and the spiritual hierarchy in general, see *The Abdal, the Awtab and the Aqtāb* by Sh. Nooruddīn Durkee as well as his essay “Why?”; and google “The Invisible Government”.



I then told him my name and my lineage, after which he said to me, ‘You were raised up to me {*rafaʿat lī*} ten years ago.’<sup>17</sup>

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās was astounded by Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, by his flowing speech, his unceasing spiritual inspirations {*ʾilhāmāt*} and his perfected manner {*suluku-r-rabbānī*}. From that moment on Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās followed him as a true {*malāzamah*} murīd to his truthful and most knowledgeable Shaykh. From his side Shaykh ash-Shādhḍhulī saw in Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās a pure nature {*fiṭrah ṭāhirah*}, a generous soul and a real readiness to travel on the Way to Allāh. Thus he gave Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās his attention and started to bring him up {*tarbiyatahu*} in a way that he would come to be his true khalīfah.

In Tunis at that time a serious argument had arisen between Shaykh ash-Shādhḍhulī and a man by the name of Ibn Barā<sup>18</sup> who was reputedly a religious judge {*qadī*} and, some say, the Chief Qadī of Tūnis at that time. Due in part to this misunderstanding and also because Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan felt that his time in Tūnis was complete, the Shaykh decided to leave Tūnis and travel east to Al-ʾIskandariyah along with most of his murīdūn. Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās narrated two stories about these travels.

“I was with the Shaykh on our way to ʾIskadariyah coming from the West {*al-gharb*}. I was so depressed at the time that I could hardly bear it. I went to the Shaykh and when he perceived my state he said to me, ‘Aḥmad.’ and I answered ‘Ye Sīdī.’ He continued and said,

“Ādam was made to be the khalīfah by the Hand of Allāh. He, praise Him on High, ordered the angels to bow down to Ādam and He made him to dwell in the Garden. Then He brought him down upon the earth. By Allāh! Ādam was not brought down upon the earth to be lessened in his station {*al-maqām*} but rather he was brought down upon this earth to be completed in his station. Before Allāh had even created Ādam He told the angels,

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

ʾINNĪ JĀʿILUN FI-L-ʾARḌI KHĀLĪFAH

*Truly I am placing a representative upon the earth.*

{2:30}

He, praised be He, did not say, ‘I am placing a khalīfah in the sky’ or ‘I am placing a khalīfah in the garden’. Therefore from this we know that it was always the intention of Allāh to place Ādam upon the earth. His coming to the earth was an honour {*karamah*}, not a disgrace. In the Garden he worshipped Allāh by knowledge {*bi-taʿrif*} and upon the earth Ādam worshipped Allāh by appointment {*bi-taklīf*}.

“You too have a share in Ādam. Your beginning was in the heavens of the spirit {*samāʿi-r-rūḥ*} in the Garden of Knowledge where you worshipped Allah by knowledge. Then you came down to the earth of soulself {*al-ʾarḍun-nafs*} in order that you too might worship Allah by appointment.

<sup>17</sup> in fact Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan had returned to Tūnis only for the purpose of meeting Abū-l-ʿAbbās, as is related on page 13 of *Orisons* along with the quote of Abū-l-Ḥasan, “Truly no one has brought me back to Tūnis but this young man.”

<sup>18</sup> see pp 13-14 of the Introduction to *Orisons* and also pp{XX} in Book One of this present volume..

“When the two forms of worship<sup>19</sup> are united in you then you will deserve to be the *khalīfah*.”

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās also related this story, “When we arrive in ʿIskandariyah from the west we made camp on the outskirts of the city. It was sunset and we were very hungry. A wealthy man from ʿIskandariyah sent us some food. When the Shaykh arrived he told us not to eat a single morsel of the food. We spent the night in hunger.

“After we had performed our morning devotions {*ṣalātu-ṣ-ṣubḥ*} the Shaykh told us to get that food and we ate it. He said, ‘I heard in my *ruʿyah* someone saying, ‘The most lawful {*al-ḥallāl*} of food is that which you neither sought nor asked for from any woman or man {*an-nisāʾ ʿaw rijāl*}.’”

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās accompanied aṣḥ-Shādhīdhulī and walked in the light of his instructions and followed the Way set forth. He never left the Shaykh nor did he ever disobey him in any matter even after the daeth of the Shaykh, may Allāh be content with both of them.

Shaykh aṣḥ-Shādhīdhulī announced that he would die and be buried in a place where no one had ever disobeyed Allāh. On his way to the Ḥajj he stopped at a spring called Ḥumaythīrah<sup>20</sup> which served as a way-station on the desert track from the Nile to the Red Sea.

When their caravan halted to spend the night, aṣḥ-Shādhīdhulī gathered together his companions {*ʿaṣhābuhu*} and gave them counsel and advice. Among his advice was that they should commit to memory {*ḥifdh*} the *Orison of the Sea* {*ḥizbu-l-baḥr*}<sup>21</sup> and he asked them to be certain that their children also commit it to memory as it contained the Greatest Name of Allāh {*ʿismu-llāhu-l-ʿaḍḥim*}.

He then took Abū-l-ʿAbbās aside in order to give him his personal advice in private and to single him out by the *barakah* given to him by Allāh. When he had finished this transmission he said to his companions, “If I die follow Abū-l-ʿAbbās. He is my *khalīfah*. He will have a great station {*maqām*} among you. He is a door among the doors to Allāh {*ḥuwa-l-bāb min ʿabwābu-llāh*}.

The author of the *Secret Pearls* {*durratu-l-ʿasrār*}, Sīdī Ibn as-Sabbagh, may Allāh be content with him, writes, “The Shaykh passed the night in the Recollection {*dhikr*} of Allāh with his face {*wajh*} turned towards Allāh. We heard him saying “ʿIllāhi, ʿIllāhi — my Allāh, my Allāh” and when the middle of the night had passed he was silent and we thought that he was sleeping. We went to move him but we found that he was dead, may the Mercy of Allāh be upon him. We called for Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī who came and washed him. We prayed the *Ṣalatu-l-Janāzah* upon him and buried him there in Ḥumaythīrah.

<sup>19</sup>the term ʿibadah {or in this particulare case the dual al-ʿabūdītān} needs a few words of explanation. It derives from ʿabada = to serve, to worship, to adore, to venerate; II to enslave, enthrall, subjugate; V to devote {oneself to the service of Allāh}; X to enslave, enthrall, subjugate. When referring to a person as in ʿabd it is often translated as slave or servant. It has been pointed out to us, especially in context of the Shaykh’s remarks about Ādam, peace be upon him, and by extension all the prophets and indeed all people, that this translation as in ʿAbdullāh = slave of Allāh or ʿAbdu-r-Raḥmān = slave of the Mercy Full etc. is not really quite accurate and is actually demeaning, for a slave is one who has no choice and all human beings have free choice, and there”is no compulsion in the *dīn* [religion]” {2:256}, thus it is more accurate, modern translation aside, to translate ʿabd as a worshipper rather than slave, for worship is a free act born out of knowledge of the existence and reality of Allāh. The other meanings can be kept in mind {slave, servant} as there is also a dimension of reality to them insofar as, though one has a choice, in truth there is no choice if one is truly self-surrendered to Allāh.

<sup>20</sup>The author of *Tāj al-ʿArrūs* {Crown of the Bride}, Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh, writes, “Ḥumaythīrah is a place in the desert of ʿAydḥāb in the Upper Ṣaʿīd a distance of two days by camel from Idḥū. In this place is the grave of the ʿImām and the Qutb, Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar aṣḥ-Shādhīdhulī., may Allāh sanctify his secret. It is a remote out of the way place.”

When they were preparing to leave on this Ḥajj Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan asked Abū-l-ʿAbbās to bring an axe, a spade and a shroud with him. When Abū-l-ʿAbbās asked why the Shaykh said, “In Ḥumaythīrah you will know.” see p 21 of *Orisons*

<sup>21</sup>text pp 21-36 *Orisons*

The author of *The Secret Pearls* goes on to write, “I have drunk from the well of Humaythirah, visited his tomb {*ḍariḥu*} and gained his barakah. We pray that Allāh may benefit us by him in this life and in the final life.” [to which we add. *Amin*].

He goes on to relate the story which he heard from Sīdī Shārafu-d-Dīn, “When we had buried him, the companions differed on whether to return back {to al-ʿIskadariyah} or to continue on with the Ḥajj.

“Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās said to them, ‘The Shaykh ordered me to perform the Ḥajj and promised me wonders {*karamāt*}.’ so thus we went ahead {with the Ḥajj} and we saw many wonders and received many blessings {*barakāt*} and we returned back {to al-ʿIskadariyah} with him.”

Among the *karāmāt* that occurred during their travelling to perform the Ḥajj was the following related by Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās,

“In the year in which our Shaykh, may Allāh be content with him, died we travelled with him on Ḥajj. When we were in the town of ʿAkḥmīm<sup>22</sup> the Shaykh said to me, ‘Last night I had a *ruʿyah* in which I found myself at sea in the midst of a great storm. The wind was blowing and the waves were very high. Our boat had been damaged and we were about to drown. I went to the gunwales of the boat and said,

‘Oh you Sea  
If you were ordered to hear they hear me and obey me  
then it is a gift from Allāh  
The Hearer, the Knower.  
If you were ordered otherwise then the judgement is by Allāh -  
the All-Mighty, the Wise.

and I heard the sea say,

I obey — I obey  
الطاعة الطاعة

“Then we travelled and the Shaykh, Allāh sanctify his secret, died and we buried him in Humaythirah in the valley of ʿAydḥāb after which we continued on and embarked on a ship to cross the sea<sup>23</sup>. When we were in the middle of the sea we found the waves were high and ship was damaged and we were about to drown. I had forgotten the *ruʿyah* of the Shaykh and what he had said to me. When the situation finally reached beyond our ability to endure I suddenly remembered the story of the Shaykh and I went to the gunwales of the ship and addressed the sea,

“Oh you Sea  
If you were ordered to hear and obey the Friends of Allāh  
{ʿawliyāʾ-llāh}  
then it is a gift from Allāh  
The Hearer, the Knower.

“I did not say, If you were ordered to hear and obey ‘me’, as the Shaykh had said, but ‘Friends of Allāh’.

“Then I said,

<sup>22</sup>A small town in the Upper Saʿīd north of Luxor

<sup>23</sup>They took ship in ʿAydḥāb on the Red Sea which is fourteen stages by camel from ʿIdfu on the Nile. From ʿAydḥāb to Jiddah, the port city for Makkah is five days to a week by sail depending on the weather and the notorious Red Sea pirates.

‘If you were ordered otherwise then the judgement is by Allāh  
the All-Mighty, the Wise.

and I heard the sea say,

I obey — I obey  
الطاعة الطاعة

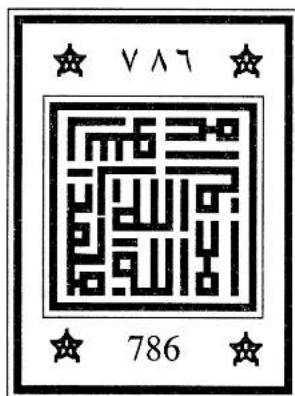
...at which point the Sea became quite calm and our voyage continued pleasantly.”

It was so clear from Sīdī ash-Shādhūlī’s great and deep affection for Abū-l-‘Abbās that he was preparing him to receive the khilāfah. After the death of the Shaykh the sublimity of Sīdī Abū-l-‘Abbās became visible and his karāmāt manifest. That the Shaykh had chosen him early on was clear from so many different events and so many thing that were said. One time the Shaykh called for him and said,

“Abū-l-‘Abbās speak to the people.” and from that time he began to sit in Jāmi‘a al-‘Aṭārīn<sup>24</sup> teaching and calling the people to the Way of Allāh by the permission {*‘idhīn*} and order {*amr*} of the Shaykh.

He continued in this way of Calling {*da‘wah*} the people all the while content by and with Allāh until he died on the 25th day of the 11th month which is the month of Pilgrimage {*dhū-l-ḥijj*} in year 685 of the Flight<sup>25</sup>. His age was then around seventy years old.

May Mercy be upon him from the Mercy of Allāh.



<sup>24</sup>The Masjid of the Scent Sellers in old Alexandria which is still in use though it has been since rebuilt or refurbished many times over.  
<sup>25</sup>{1287 CE}

## SOME OF HIS WONDERS

**S**īdī Yūsuf ibn ʿIsmaʿīl an-Nabahānī, the Knower by Allāh {*al-ʿarif bi-llāh*} in his book, *The Collection of the Wonders of the Friends* {*al-kitābu-l-jāmʿa karāmātu-l-ʿawliyāʿ*}, told me numerous stories of the wonders {*karāmāt*} of Sīdī, Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās al Mursī. From these stories I have chosen a few to relate to the reader of this book.

One of his wonders, may Allāh be content with him, was his saying,

“For forty years there has never been a veil {*ḥijabah*} between the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and me. Had I been veiled from him for even a blink of any eye I would have considered myself among the Muslims.”

Regarding al-Khīḍr {The Evergreen}, peace upon him, he said, “He is alive and I have put this hand of mine in his hand. al-Khīḍr told me, ‘If anyone says the following *duʿah* {supplication} every morning then they will become one of the ʿabdāl <sup>26</sup>.’”

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لُاُمَّةِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
اَللّٰهُمَّ اَصْلِحْ اُمَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
اَللّٰهُمَّ تَجَاوَزْ عَنْ اُمَّةِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا مِنْ اُمَّةِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

ALLAHUMMA-GH-FIR LI-ʿUMMATI MUḤAMMADIN  
ṢALLA-LLĀHU ʿALAYHI WA SALLAM

ALLAHUMMA-Ṣ-LAḤ ʿUMMATI MUḤAMMADIN  
ṢALLA-LLĀHU ʿALAYHI WA SALLAM

ALLAHUMMA TAJĀWAZ ʿAN ʿUMMATI MUḤAMMADIN  
ṢALLA-LLĀHU ʿALAYHI WA SALLAM

ALLAHUMMA-JĀ-ʿALNA MIN ʿUMMATI MUḤAMMADIN  
ṢALLA-LLĀHU ʿALAYHI WA SALLAM

*Oh Allāh! Forgive the Community of Muhammad, blessings of Allāh upon him and peace.*

*Oh Allāh! Reconcile the Community of Muhammad, blessings of Allāh upon him and peace.*

*Oh Allāh! Reward the Community of Muhammad, blessings of Allāh upon him and peace.*

*Oh Allāh! Make us to be from the Community of Muhammad,  
blessings of Allāh upon him and peace.*

One of the *fuqarāʾ*<sup>27</sup> told this story to Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan and he said, “Abū-l-ʿAbbās told the truth.”

<sup>26</sup> One of the Forty Compensators who substitute {*badala*} for the Prophets of Bani ʿIsrāʾīl. They are the hidden pillars of the community who are replaced upon their death by another member of the ʿawliyāʿ, peace be upon them all.

<sup>27</sup> literally = the poor. Refers to a member of a Ṣūfī order who are poor in this world and rich in the next and who strive to have nothing so they may have everything. It also signifies their poverty of things and their riches with Allāh on account of their never having any thing but Allāh.



In another story Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās said, “al-Khīdr, peace be upon him, once visited me. He introduced himself to me and I got benefit from him on account of his knowledge {*maʿrifah*} concerning the spirits of the believers in the unseen {*ʿarwāḥ al-muʾminūn bi-l-ghayb*} and whether they were in torture {*maʿadhib*} or bliss {*minʿamah*}. If a thousand learned jurists {*fuqahāʾ*} came to me this minute and told me that al-Khīdr, the Mercy of Allāh be upon him, was dead I would not listen to them.”

Another dimension of his wonders can be seen in this story: “The Sulṭān ordered a chicken to be slain {*dhabih*} in the manner prescribed by the Law and another, contrary to the Law, to be suffocated.<sup>28</sup> The Sulṭān then ordered that the two chickens be cooked together. When they were done he took them to Abū-l-ʿAbbās and sat to eat with him.

“The Shaykh looked at the two chickens and ordered that the servant to take away the suffocated one saying that it was impure {*najas*} and unfit for eating. He also declined to eat the second one saying that were it not for the fact that it had been cooked with the first one that he would have eaten it. This story was confirmed by ash-Shaʿrānī.

al-Manāwī relayed a similar story in which he said that, “A man offered the Shaykh food which was not *halāl*<sup>29</sup> in an endeavour to test him. The Shaykh refused to eat it saying, ‘al-Muḥṣab<sup>30</sup> had a vein in his hand that would throb if his hand stretched out to take impure food. In my hand there are sixty<sup>31</sup> such veins that would throb.”

Another of his karāmāt for which he had been singled out was his setting {*tasaluk*} of thirty judges {*qādiāʾ*} on the Path. In this context he used to say to Yaqūt al-ʿArshī<sup>32</sup>, “It is not a matter of every day putting a thousand ordinary men {*al-ʿawām*} on the Path but rather it is a matter of putting one of the fuqahāʾ on the Path in a hundred years.”

Shaykh Ḥasan al-ʿIdwī said in his explanation {*sharḥ*} of the *Burdah* {*The Mantle*} of al-Busirī<sup>33</sup> that a man said, “I prayed behind Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās and I saw light covering his entire body and radiating from it with such luminance that I could not look at him.”

Finally we must say what the Shaykh himself said about his karāmāt, “By Allāh! I never sat for teaching or for calling to Allāh that I didn’t put my karāmāt under my carpet.”



<sup>28</sup>the slaughtering or, rather, sacrificing of animals in ʾIslāmīc law is specifically regulated in accord with the prescriptions of Allāh contained in al-Qurʾān {2:173, 5:3, 5:4, 6:118-9, 6:121, 6:145, 16:115} and by the example {*sunnaḥ*} set by the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.

<sup>29</sup>that which is allowed, permissible or permitted by Islāmīc Law

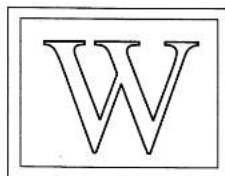
<sup>30</sup>Ḥarith al-Muḥāsibī

<sup>31</sup>a hyperbolic number and, as such, a figure of speech not to be taken literally

<sup>32</sup>Yaqūt al-ʿArshī, his slave and manservant from Ḥabashah {Ethiopia} whom he later freed and who subsequently married his daughter and finally became, along with Ibn ʿAṭāʾIlāh as-Sakandarī, his khalīfah. May Allah sanctify their secret.

<sup>33</sup>Author {d.694/1295} of the epic qasīdah “Qasīdatu-l-Burdah” on The Masntle of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. al-Busirī was a student of al-Mursī and his tomb is only a few hundred meters from al-Mursī’s in Alexandria.

## THE TRAINER of SOULS



we shall now speak about one of the most important functions of Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās which is that aspect of his being termed *‘al-murabbī’* in Arabic. English unfortunately does not contain one all-embracing word by which we can translate this term. In Arabic, in the context of the Shaykh or Teacher, it means the one who nourishes, fosters, supports, advances, aids, encourages or trains another person in the Way of goodness and grace; in the Way of Allāh. It comes from the same root as does *‘ar-rabb’* which means, when referring to Allāh; *the* Lord and when referring to a man it means the master, as in *‘ar-rabbu-l-bayt’*. In its verbal form it is used when referring to the tender care the farmer takes to nurture his crops or when referring to woman it means specifically the function of the mother in nourishing her child by feeding it with her breast. We have chosen to translate it in the context of this book as ‘The Trainer of Souls’ but we hope that it is understood that this is but a single facet of the term that is used in the original: *‘al-murrabī’*, and hope that our reader will take this into consideration.

The truly great *shyūkh*<sup>34</sup> are most always great educators, trainers, fosterers or *murrabūn* of their *muridūn*. Were this not so they would not be known as the founders of schools {*madāris*} and they could not have connected their students {*muridūn*} to the knowledge of Allāh.

Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh sanctify his secret, said to Zakī-ud-dīn al-ʿAswānī, “Oh Zakī. Stick close to Abū-l-ʿAbbās. A bedūw who urinates on his own leg<sup>35</sup> may come to him in the morning and by evening he has arrived {*wuṣūl*} to knowledge of Allāh.”

It was the custom of Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās to thoroughly review and investigate {*tafaqqud*} his *muridūn* in regard to their states {*ʿahwāl*}, their inspirations {*ʿilhām*} from Allāh and their intuitive insights {*firāsah*} and well as by engaging them in discussion so as to check their understanding and progress. He used to say that the “*shyūkh* should follow up their *muridūn*.”

On one occasion he said to one of his followers, “Why have you left me?” and the *murīd* replied that, “Because of you I have no need of anyone.” To which the Shaykh said, “There is no one without the need of another. Sayyidīnā Abu Bakr<sup>36</sup>, may Allāh be content with him, though he had the direct benefit of being with the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, did not come to be without need of him. Indeed he never left him for a single day.”

He also used to say to his *muridūn*, “A *murīd* must tell his *Shaykh* was his on his mind.” His explanation for this was that the spiritual master {*al-ʿustādh*} is like a doctor and the *murīd* is like his patient. The patient must make the doctor aware of his total condition and must not hide anything from his doctor if he expects to be cured. Truthfully speaking the *murīd* who hides something from his Shaykh, is actually a stranger to his Shaykh, and is not really one with the Shaykh.

<sup>34</sup>plural of *shaykh*

<sup>35</sup>urine touching any part of the body completely vitiates one’s state of ritual purity and thus renders invalid any act of worship and so also precludes and degrades most voluntary acts of devotion. Most likely our Shaykh used it in this context to signify a person who was both ignorant {*jahl*} and heedless or mindless {*ghaflah*}.

<sup>36</sup>the close companion and staunch supporter of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him as well as the first of the rightly guided representatives {*kḥulāfaʾ-r-rashidūn*}.

Sīdī Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh as-Sakandārī relates this story, “I once said to some friends of the Shaykh, ‘I wish that the Shaykh would give me some attention and put me in his thoughts.’ The Shaykh knew of this and when I went to visit him said, ‘Do not ask the Shaykh to place you in his thoughts but, rather, place the Shaykh in your thoughts. To the degree that you do this just to that degree will the Shaykh be with you.’ Then he said to me, ‘What would you like to be? By Allāh you will be.’”

The Shaykh was meticulous in recognising the human dignity {*al-karāmatu-l-ʿinsāniyyah*} of his muridṣun. He was not like some of the shuyūkh who leave their students waiting when they have come for a meeting. He said in this connection, “A murīd comes to his Shaykh in the state of great spiritual determination and zeal {*himmah*}. If the murīd is made to wait, his zeal may be dampened and his ardour {*himmah*} extinguished.”

A Shaykh should ask his murīd about the truth of his claims and the nature of his limitations {*qāsirah*} for as long as he is a beginner, but must not continue in this way for too long. When the murīd reaches maturity {*bulūgh*} it is not necessary for the Shaykh to ask him for proofs {*bayyinah*}, for at that point the murīd will have dropped his appetitive cravings {*wiḥām*}.

Whenever the Shaykh finds the murīd entering by himself<sup>37</sup> into the spiritual offices {*al-ʿawrād*}<sup>38</sup> he should order the murīd to cease. The Shaykh was keen on breaking the habits of immature aspirants to indulge themselves in deceptive illusion {*hawāham*}, saying, “He who loves visibility. {*adh-dhahūr*} worships appearance. He who loves to be unknown {*khaḥfī*} worships hiddenness. But for the one who worships Allāh {*ʿabdu-llāh*}, it is all one to him whether Allāh causes him to appear or vanish.”

In order to help the muridūn to reject their own self indulgence, he used to tell the story of how the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, overheard Abū Bakr, may Allāh be content with him, reciting the Qurʾān in a low voice whilst at the same time ‘Umār<sup>39</sup>, may Allāh be content with him, was reading in a loud voice.

He, eternal blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, asked Abū Bakr why he was reciting in a low voice and received the answer that, “I have made myself heard to He to whom I am speaking.” He then asked ‘Umār why he was reciting in a loud voice and received the reply, “In order to awaken the sleepers and drive away the Shayṭān.

“The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, then said to Abū Bakr, “Raise your voice a bit.” and he said to ‘Umār, “Lower your voice a bit.”

The Shaykh said, “The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, meant in this way to cause each of them to abandon their own will {*ʿirādah*} and join their selves to his will.”

Following the practice of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, the Shaykh sought to bring his muridūn to the point where they abandoned their self indulgence and illusions. If, for instance, he found a murīd boasting {*fakhr*} of his asceticism {*zuhd*} and his dropping of concern or pre-occupation with the world {*ad-dunyā*} he would say, “My brother. You give the dunyā too much importance when you think it is something you must abstain {*zahadat*} from. It is less than you think.”

<sup>37</sup> without a direct or permission order from the shaykh

<sup>38</sup> pp 97-97 Introduction to *Orisons* and pp 269-274 of Arabic Text

<sup>39</sup> the second of the rightly guided representatives {*kḥulāfaʾ-r-rashidūn*}.

It is important that the murīd understand certain things about both *al-fakhr* in the sense of boasting, bragging and false pride in one's voluntary poverty {*faqr*} or asceticism {*zuhd*} and *adh-dhahūr* in the sense of the love of appearance, visibility, pomp, conspicuousness, ostentation and general 'show'.

There are those who believe that because they wear patched or rough clothing and eat or drink coarse or tasteless foods, they are by virtue of this behaviour travelling on the Ṣūfī Path. Indeed Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās found that there was this tendency among some of his own muridūn.

What was his view of this and what is the view of the School of ash-Shādhdhūlī in this matter?

Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh as-Sakandārī writes, "The view of Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās as well as that of his Shaykh, Abū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh be content with them, and his companions was that one should avoid any way of dressing that reveals the secret {*as-sirr*} of the one who is wearing the clothes. He who dresses unusually {*ābidah*} for the sake of being different is a pretender."

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās makes clear the views of his Shaykh when he relates, "I once went to Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan and I had it in mind to eat coarse food and wear rough clothing. The Shaykh told me, "Know Allāh {*ʿarifu-llāh*} and be as you like."

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās also relates that, "A faqīr<sup>40</sup> came to visit Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan dressed in garments made from the uncured skins of sheep<sup>41</sup>. When the Shaykh had finished his talk the man approached the Shaykh and took hold of his garments, saying, "Allāh is not worshipped in such garments as yours." The Shaykh in turn fingered the man's garments and said,

"The clothes I am wearing say, "I am enriched by Allāh", whereas what you are wearing calls out to all, "I am in need. Give me."

Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh comments on this, saying, "Please do not take it to mean that we are criticising those who dress poorly {because they are poor}. What we mean to say here is that it is not necessary to dress poorly in order to be a Ṣūfī. Neither blame nor fame attaches themselves to a person on account of their dress, be it rich or poor. What is important is that the person in the clothing be one from among those who seek perfection {*al-muḥsinūn*} or do the best {*al-muḥsinūn*}.

Allāh says,.

مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

MĀ ʿALA-L-MUḤSINĪN MIN SABĪL

*There is no way against those who do the best.*

{9:91}

<sup>40</sup> faqīr = {lit} a poor man. Because many ṣūfīs, throughout time, have both adopted the course of voluntary poverty on the more visible outer plane and vowed that their only wealth would be Allāh on a more internal plane, they came to be known collectively as the fuqarāʾ or singularly as a faqīr. There have also been, throughout time, pretenders who played on this, course, and especially adopted the more outwardly appearance, as a way of living off the community and avoiding certain aspects of the ʿIslāmīc social contract defined by Allāh in the Qurʾān and confirmed by the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him in his way of being {*sunnah*}. The root is √faqara = he was poor, he was destitute etc.

<sup>41</sup> because of the relationship between ṣūf {wool} and ṣūfī, many of the fuqarāʾ {both the real and the pretenders} dressed in woolen garments. In this case the faqīr seems to have taken it a bit far by dressing not in wool {ṣūf} but in the skin of the sheep and an uncured one at that.



Dressing in a subtle or genteel manner, eating appetizing foods, drinking cool beverages are not a subject of blame or approbation as long as they are accompanied by gratitude {*shukr*} to Allāh.

There is a story of how, one day in Ramaḍān, Sidi Abū-l-ʿAbbās came to his Shaykh with the intention of breaking his fast at the end of a hot day with water from a skin<sup>42</sup>. The Shaykh said to him, “Make the water cool, my son. When you drink warm water and say ‘Praise Allāh’ {*al-ḥamdu-li-llāh*}<sup>43</sup> you say it out of obligation, but when you drink cold water and say *al-ḥamdu-li-llāh* every organ of your body responds to Allāh with gratitude and thanks.”

The root of this understanding stems from the Words of Allāh in al-Qurʾān on the tongue of the Prophet Mūsā {Moses}, peace be upon him, after he had watered the sheep of the two women of Madyan.

فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ  
رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ

FA-SAQĀ LAHUMĀ THUMMA TAWALLĀʾ ʾILA-ḌḤ-ḌḤILLA FA-QĀLA  
RABBI ʾINNI LI-MAĀĀ AŅZALTA ʾILAYYA MAN KḤAYRIN FAQĪR

*So he watered {their sheep} for the two of them and then he turned aside into the shade and said,  
‘My Lord, whatever good which you may send down on me, I am in need.’*

{28:24}

See how, after exerting himself, he then retired to a shady place and thanked Allāh for it; thankful for any goodness which Allāh cared to provide, down to the level of a shady place in which to sit.

Concerning *adh-dḥahūr*, by which is meant sense of the love of appearance, visibility, pomp, conspicuousness, ostentation and general ‘show’, there are a number of different facets which the murīd must consider and examine especially insofar as they relate to one’s own self.

One example of this can be found in the showing of excessive passion in the midst of circles of *as-samāʿ*<sup>44</sup>. It is a phenomenon usually observed in beginners {*al-mubtaḍḍīn*} and the people of states {*al-ʾaḥwāl*} rather than those of stations {*al-maqamāt*}. Sidi Abū-l-ʿAbbās used to say in this context,

“The perfected man {*al-ʾinsanu-l-kāmil*} is the one who controls his state {*al-ḥāl*}.” He also said that, “There is a worshipper {*ʿabd*} who is in his state by his state and there is a worshipper {*ʿabd*} who is in his state by the Giver of the State. He who is in his state by his state is the slave of his state {*ʿabdu-l-ḥāl*}. He who is in his state by the Giver of the State is the Slave of the Giver of States {*ʿabu-l-mu-ḥawwil*}. He that is in his state by his state will be saddened when it passes and lament its leaving whereas he that is in his state by the Giver of the State will neither rejoice nor lament in either the coming or the going of a state, knowing full well that all and everything is coming from the Giver.

Sidi Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh explained this by saying that, “The meaning of the Shaykh’s words is that the one who is witness to Allāh has everything and no thing has him.”

<sup>42</sup>which would be roughly like tap water on a hot day

<sup>43</sup>What one always says on finishing a meal or drinking the last drop of a cup.

<sup>44</sup>literally hearing or audition. These are gatherings where people listen to the recital of Qurʾān, Dhikr, Qasāid, or sometimes even poetry.



“The state is under His control and domination {*qahar*}. This can only be realised by the mature {*ar-rajal*} due to the depth of knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} of Allāh, for knowledge rules over state {*wa-l-ʿilmu ḥākimun ʿala ḥal*}. Knowledge is equilibrium {*wazn*}. States are concomitant and circumstantial<sup>45</sup> branches of knowledge. Knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} is in itself abiding {*qāra*} and unshakable {*thābit*} but state {*ḥāl*} has no permanent existence. In this connection it is said,

Because you are changing you are called a state.

Everything that changes vanishes.

Observe the shadow.

When it reaches its greatest length it disappears.”

The great ones rule their states by Allāh, for it is He who has made them to be Masters of the States.

ʿImām al-Junayd, may Allāh sanctify his secret, was asked why some of the Shuyūkh were to be seen moving when they attended the *samāʿ* and he, to the contrary, was not moving but stationary and fixed. He replied, using the Words of Allāh, the Most High

و تَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَ هِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

WA TARA-L-JIBĀLA TAḤSABUHĀ JĀMIDATAŅW-

WA HIYA TAMURRU MARRA-S-SAḤĀBĀ

*and you shall see the mountains that you suppose are fixed  
and they are flying like the clouds*

{27:88}

Another of the great ones was asked, "Why do you not move in the *samāʿ*?" and he replied, "I do not move, for there may be that there is someone of a more elevated rank present than I amongst the gathering. Out of respect I hold my emotions. But when I am alone {*kḥalwat*} I let them flow."

And the Shaykh said, "See how the reins of emotion were thus firmly held; thus he holds fast when he likes and lets go when he will. So in a like fashion when the heart {*al-qalb*} is expanded by the spiritual knowledge of Allāh {*bi-maʿrifatu-llāh*} it is capable of containing the incoming inspirations and intuitive perceptions {*al-wāradāt*}. The effect of a state shows only on he who is incapable of containing it. The knower by Allāh alone is capable of containing the spiritual knowledge {*al-maʿarifah*}."

In this same context it is often said that, "The man of state is like a stream or a river. When the rain of spiritual knowledge {*maʿrifah*} descends, the river over flows its banks and floods the land. Or if the *wāradāt* descend upon him he is drowned {*ghariq*} in his *maʿarifah*. The man of station {*maqām*} and dwelling {*manzil*} is, however, like the ocean. When the rain of knowledge descends he contains and absorbs it, for have you ever seen an ocean flooded by rain?"

This understanding may help to explain why the really great Sūfis are seldom known and if they are known are not really understood, whilst the people with conspicuous states are more usually known due to the appearance {*dhāhir*} upon them of those states. They are too weak to bear them and not disciplined enough to control them. In truth they are without real science {*ʿilm*} or knowledge {*maʿarifah*}. The man of ḥāl may be more greatly acclaimed than the man of maqām, but the distance between them is greater than that which exists between the earth and the heavens.

<sup>45</sup> *farāʿ min farāʿ* = branches of branches or tributaries of tributaries

We can safely say, and indeed it is well known to those who know, that insofar a being is confirmed in the Godly Science {*al-ʿulūmu-l-ʿilāhiyah*} and the Lordly Knowledge {*al-maʿarifatu--r-rabāniyah*} this being will be a stranger {*ʿistighrāb*} to this world {*ad-dunyā*} and few will be those who know him and of those who do come to know him, most will leave him.<sup>46</sup>

Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās speaks to this saying, “A walī will arrive {*yaṣal*} to Allāh until he cuts off {*tanqaʿ*} his passion to arrive {*wuṣul*}.”

ʿImām aṣḥ-Ṣḥārānī says what is meant in this instance is, “Cutting off {*ʿanqaṭāʿ*}<sup>47</sup> with politeness {*ʿadab*} and not cutting off because one is fed-up or without hope. Cutting off because surrender has mastered one’s heart which is the contentment {*riḍā*} of Allāh upon him.” And Ṣḥaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan says, “A walī will not arrive to Allāh until the passion {*aṣḥ-ṣhawāh*} of his passions, the planning {*at-tadbīr*} of his planning and the perfidy {*al-khatra*} of his treachery are all dead.”

Ṣḥaykh Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh commented on this saying, “The Ṣḥaykh means that the ceasing shall be a ceasing in politeness and not in despair because the surrender {*ʿislām*} to Allāh — and through that surrender to, and acceptance of, the choices made for one by Allāh and the subsequent witnessing of the reality that it is Allāh who truly is the best of choosers — is the *true* beginning of one’s resignation and absolute submission to Allāh.”

“We have composed a short poem on this which was included in our book, Illuminations {*at-tanwīr*}:

Be His slave and leave your reins in His Hand.

Never plan for it will not succeed.

Do you presume to plan when it is Allāh who is *the* Planner?

Will you resist the Judgement of Allāh?

The annihilation {*fanāʾ*} of will and planning

is the ultimate goal if only you will understand.

This is the Road our ancestors travelled and they arrived.

If you would be successful then travel in their footsteps.”

No doubt Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh wanted to say that the resolution of the heart {*jazmu-l-qalb*} and the certainty of the self {*at-tiqīnu-n-nafs*} are themselves a commitment {*tafwīd*} to Allāh, for beyond the planning of Allāh there is, in Reality, no planning nor are there any plans in Truth but His Plans and beyond His Will there is no other. That we can say this does not mean, however, that we are contradicting the subservience {*ʿistakḥḍhāʾ*} to causality {*al-ʿasbāb*}, for Allāh Most High says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ

YĀĀʾAYUHĀ-L-LADḥĪNĀ ʾĀMANŪ KHUDḥU ḤIDḥRAKUM

Oh you who believe, take your precautions

{4:71}

And in like manner Allāh has also said to us in the Book of Discernment {*al-qurʾān al-furqān*}:

<sup>46</sup>See al-Qurʾān Chapter of the Cave {18:60-82}

<sup>47</sup>*qataʿa* = to cut off, to chop off, to amputate, to cut through, to sunder, to disjoin, to sever {relations}, to break off a {friendship} also to ford a river, to surmount an obstacle, to make a great effort and to use up or completely consume.

أَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ

ʾAʿIDDŪ LAHU-MMĀ-S-TAṬAʿTU-MMIN QUWWAH

*Make ready for them all you can of power*

{8:60}

The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, always used to prepare carefully, yet at the same time he submitted all stages of his planning — before, during and after — to Allāh, trusting in Him and in Him alone and knowing that it is Allāh Who, as we are reminded on numerous occasions in the the Qurʾān, has the power over all things.<sup>48</sup>

It is this sure and certain knowledge that it is Allāh who truly has power over all things that leads us to understand our real position in the scheme of things, which has the tendency to deflate titanism in thought and, in general, to make us avoid feelings of false powers or authority. Those who know make full submission to Allāh, for in the beginning and the end it is He who will bring about the final outcome. Abū-l-ʿAbbās was very keen to instill this understanding in the minds and hearts of his muridūn. It was in this context that he told the following story about one Samnūn, who had gotten a bit carried away and in the course of his supplications {*duʿāʾ*} boldly cried out to Allāh,

“I have no choice but you. Test me however You want!”

Shortly thereafter he found that his ability to urinate had ceased. He was patient at the beginning but soon began to complain and went around saying,

“Make *duʿāʾ* to Allāh for your lying uncle!”

The Shāykh said, “It would have been wiser if Samnūn had said,

‘I have no choice but you. Forgive me in any way you like!’

Samnūn was tested by his own pride {*al-ʾiktibar*}. Had he said,

‘Support me with Your Power and then test me in any way you like,’

that also might have been possible.”

In this sense the Shāykh often said to his muridūn, “If you are asked, ‘Do you fear Allāh?’ then say, ‘Yes, in so far as He has created fear in me.’ Similarly when you are asked, ‘Do you love Allāh?’ answer, ‘Yes! In so far as He has created love of Him in me.’ He that takes this approach will be tested on his reliance upon Allāh and not on his own power. It is written, ‘Every pretender will be tested!’”

He used to also speak to the muridūn about the way in which his Shāykh had nurtured him, saying,

“I once went to Abū-l-Ḥasan and he said, ‘If you want to be my friend then do not ask anyone for anything. If something comes to you without asking do not take it.’ I thought to myself, ‘But the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, used to accept presents,’ and he said, ‘What comes to you without asking, then take it.’ Immēdiately the Shāykh said to me, ‘It seems you are thinking that the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, ‘What comes to you without asking then take it.’ But then you should consider how Allāh described His Messenger,

<sup>48</sup> this phrase is repeated many times throughout the Qurʾān as for instance in 2:20, 2:109, 2:148, 2:259, 2:284, et seq

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُنْذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ

QUL 'INNAMAĀĀ 'UNDĤIRUKUM BI-L-WAHĪ

Say, 'I warn you by The Revelation'  
{21:45}

“What has Allāh given you of The Revelation {*al-wahī*}? If you have to follow the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, in anything then let it be in giving. He never took anything from anybody without rewarding them in return. If your self {*nafs*} has been thus purified {*ṭaṭaharat*} and sanctified {*taqadasat*} then you too may accept presents. Otherwise don't.”

Another story in line with these is one related by the pious Shaykh Yāqūt al-ʿArsh<sup>49</sup>, who told it in al-ʿIskandariyah in the year 715 of the Flight.

“I was praying in one of the masājīd on the outskirts of al-ʿIskandariyah and I had been staying there for several days. After some time I felt hungry and so I entered the city with the intention of visiting the Shaykh. On the way I found a dirhamā in the street and decided to buy some staples<sup>50</sup>. In the market {*as-sūqq*} I saw some beautiful sultanas {*zabībā*} and since the Shaykh was from al-Andalūs and sultanas grow there in abundance I decided to buy them.

“I bought them but didn't eat any for myself as I preferred the Shaykh above myself and had decided to keep them for him. When I went to him I found him sitting in the zawiyā in the sea wall where he had lived with Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan. I placed the sultanas before him and stayed with him for some time. When I thought it was time to leave I got up to go, whereupon he said, 'Sit down!' So I sat down and then a man came in with a roast sheep and five loaves of bread.

“The Shaykh said, 'Eat! This is your reward for having preferred me above your self when it was you who were hungry.' I ate all by myself until my stomach was quite full. Then he ordered that the rest of the fuqarāʾ come in to eat. When they were eating he handed me the sultanas and said to me, 'Take these and give them away {*sadaqah*}. We are not permitted to eat from the gleanings {*al-laqatah*}.’”

He also used to say along the same lines, “He that buys oil from the grocer and asks him to increase it by one drop will find that his dīn is as tiny as that one drop. He that buys charcoal and asks the seller to increase it by a single piece will find that his heart is blacker than that one piece of charcoal.”

He agreed with Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan on the measure of scaling the truthfulness of the murīd. He said,

“He that is confirmed by Allāh as His Friend {*walī*} will not hate death. This is the scale for the muridūn by which they may measure themselves, if they imagine themselves to be from the ʿawliyāʾ. The nafs craves to be in higher stations without travelling on the path that leads to them. Allāh says,

<sup>49</sup> also known as Yaqūt al-Habashī who, along with Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh, was a khalifah of Sidi Mursī Abū-l-ʿAbbās. His resting place, may Allāh perfume it, in al-Iskandariya is only a few hundred meters from that of Sidi al-Mursī. He was purchased as a slave by the Shaykh and became his personal attendant. Later the Shaykh freed him and arranged for him to marry his daughter. He is the founder of the school {al-Ḥanafīyyah} which adheres most closely to the original oral traditions of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan. See page 58 of the Introduction to the *Orisons* and the section on him in this volume.

<sup>50</sup> *khubzan wa ʿidman* = bread and that which is eaten with it.



فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

FA-TAMANNAWA-L-MŌWTA ʾIN KUṬTUM ṢADIQĪN

*Wish for death if you are honest!*  
{2:94}

The Shāykh did not neglect mentioning the virtues {*fadāʾil*} the murīds should adopt and by which they might test their own truthfulness in the application of these virtues to the day-to-day living of their lives. In this context my Shāykh said to me, “Do not accompany any one except that you note that these virtues are present:

“They are generous whilst being poor.

They forgive the offences of others.

They are patient and steadfast in the midst of difficulties.

They are content with what Allāh decides {*qaḍīyah*}.”

In concluding this section we would like to quote some of the directives given by Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, for it was he, more than any other, who gathered together the teaching of his Shāykh, Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās and the Shāykh of his Shāykh, Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh sanctify their secret.

Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh said, “I hear him [Sīdī Mursī] saying, ‘I would like to have a manuscript<sup>51</sup> of the book at-Taḥṭīb<sup>52</sup> which was sent to my son Jamālu-d-dīn.’ I went and copied it without telling the Shāykh and {when I had finished} I brought him the first volume. He asked, ‘What is this?’ and I replied that it was a ‘copy of at-Taḥṭīb which I have copied for you.’ He took it and said to me,

“‘Bear in mind that no one gives the wālī anything. ʾInshaʾAllāh you will find the reward for this on your balance {*mīzān*} sheet {at the Day of Judgment}.’

“After I brought him a copy of the second volume one of his friends met me and told me he said, ‘By Allāh! I shall make him an eye<sup>53</sup> of the Eyes of Allāh who will be followed in the outer and the inner knowledge.’

“When I brought him a copy of the third volume I left it and later one of his companions met me and said, “I was with the Shāykh and I found him {reading} a red book and he said, ‘This book has been copied for me by Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh. By Allāh I shall not be content until I see him sitting in the seat of his grandfather<sup>54</sup>, but by an abundance of taṣawwuf.’

“One of his companions told me that the Shāykh once said, “When Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, the Alexandrian faqīh, comes, bring him in to see me.’ When I arrived they informed the Shāykh and he said, ‘Come closer to me,’ until I was sitting directly in front of him, whereupon he said, ‘Jibrīl, peace upon him, once came to the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, and with him there was another angel who had been ordered {by Allāh} to make

<sup>51</sup> here he means literally that— a handwritten copy. This was quite a long while prior to moveable type.

<sup>52</sup> a well -known and concise reference book of Fiqh.

<sup>53</sup> see page 17 text of Ḥadīth Qudsī and footnote 19 on the same page

<sup>54</sup> a well known and pious faqīh of the Malikī school in al-ʾIskandariyah. See Book Four and pp 51-52 Intro to *Orisons*.



the Quraysh<sup>55</sup> obey the words of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. The Angel of the Mountains {*maliku-l-jibāl*} greeted him with peace and said, ‘Oh Muḥammad. I can cause the mountains to close in on them {the people of Ṭāif}.’

“The Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said, ‘No. I pray to Allāh that some of their descendents will accept the Tawḥīd<sup>56</sup> of Allāh and avoid associating partners {*yashrik*} with Allāh.’

“Thus the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, patiently endured them and some of their descendants did become believers and just so we have patiently endured the old faqīh {his grandfather} out of love of this young faqīh {meaning Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh}.”

“Sidi Jalmālu-d-dīn, the son of the Shaykh, said to me, ‘I told the Shaykh that they want to put Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh in the Chair of Fiqh.’ The Shaykh said to me, “Let them place him on the Chair of Fiqh — I shall place him on the Chair of Taṣawwuf.” I saw him later and he said to me, ‘When the Faqīh Naṣru-d-dīn<sup>57</sup> recovers he will put you on your grandfather’s Chair. After he will sit by your side and I will sit on your other side and then you will speak from the two branches {the outer and the inner, *adḥ-ḍḥāhir wa-l-bāṭin*} of knowledge {*al-‘ilm*}.’ His words were fulfilled, may Allāh be content with him.”

“One day I left the Faqīh Makīnu-d-dīn al-ʿAsmar and I met up with Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Jarīrī, may Allāh be content with them both. He greeted me with a smile and I asked him, ‘How do you know me?’ He replied, ‘How can I not know you? Once I was sitting with Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās and you were present. When you left, the Shaykh said, ‘I like that young man. Some of our companions do not show up but this young man is always present.’ Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās said, ‘This young man will not die until he becomes a Caller {*daʿī*} to Allāh.’ And again what the Shaykh said came to pass, al-ḥamdu-li-llāh.”

“This is a duʿā of the Shaykh to counter suspicion, doubt and the whisperings of Shayṭān:

سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْخَلَّاقِ  
إِنْ يَشَاءُ يَذْهَبْكُمْ، وَيَأْتِ جَدِيدٌ،  
وَمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ

SUBĤĤĀNA-L-MĀLLIKU-KĤĤALAQA  
ʿIN-Y-YASHĤAʿA YADĤĤABUKUM • WA YAʿTI JADĤDĤ  
WA MĀ DHĤĤALIKA ʿALA-LLĤĤHU BI-ʿAZĤZ

Praise be to the King of Creation  
If He wishes He will banish you and bring a new {creation}  
That is not difficult for Allāh the Almighty.

<sup>55</sup> The noble tribe of Makkah of whom Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, was a highly respected member who had the nickname al-Āmin or the Honest One. They opposed him bitterly for almost 23 years until finally he overcame them. For a full history see the book, *Muhammad : his life based on the earliest sources* by Dr Martin Lings Published jointly by George Allen & Unwin and The Islamic Texts Society, London, UK 1983

<sup>56</sup> *tawḥīd* = oneness, from *waḥada* = one. By extension the Doctrine of the Absolute Singularity of Allāh.

<sup>57</sup> Understood to have been the Chief Maliki faqīh of al-ʿIskandariyah at that time

"I once composed a poem in praise of the Shaykh which I will relate at the end of this book. After I recited it to him he said, 'May Allāh support you with the Holy Spirit {*bi-rūhi-l-quds*}.'

"I also composed another poem at his request. This poem was in response to a poem written by a man from ʾAkḥmīm. When I read it to him he said:

"When this faqih came {meaning Sidi Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh} to me he had two sicknesses. Allāh has relieved him of both of them. Now he will sit and speak with two knowledges.. Here the Shaykh was referring to the sickness of the whisperings {*al-waswasah*} of Shayṭān and my doubts. These both left me by the barakah of the Shaykh. The other sickness was a pain in my head for which he made duʿāʾ and Allāh cured me."

"One night I went to sleep in distress. I saw the Shaykh in a *ruʾyah* and I complained to him.

"He said, 'Be quiet {*ʾiskut*}. By Allāh I shall teach you a great knowledge {*ʿilman ʿaḍḥimā*}.' When I awoke I went to the Shaykh and told him my *ruʾyah* and he said, 'Thus it will be, ʾinshāʾa-llāh.'"

"The Shaykh, may Allāh be content with him, once returned from a trip and we went to meet him. When I greeted him he said, 'Oh Abū Aḥmad. May Allāh be for you and be tender {*lutf*} with you and put you on the Way of His Friends {*ʾawliyāʾahu*} and cause you to be respected among His Creatures.'"

"I realised the barakah of his duʿāʾ and I knew that I could never leave the people because of his asking that Allāh might cause me to be 'respected among His Creatures.'"

We have selected the above quotes from here and there in order to show the relation between the Shaykh and Sidi Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh so that the reader might have an idea of the taste or the scent of the relation between the Shaykh and his murīd. In closing we mention four things about Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās as an example {*mithāl*} of the complete fosterer, educator, nourisher and trainer {*murabbi*}.

- It was the custom of Sidi Abū-l-ʿAbbās to thoroughly review and investigate {*tafaqqud*} his muridūn in regard to their states {*ʾaḥwāl*}, their inspirations {*ʾilhām*} from Allāh and their intuitive insights {*firāsah*} and well as by engaging them in discussion so as to check their understanding and progress. He used to say that "the shaykh should follow up their muridūn."
- He encouraged his muridūn to give up, reject and finally transcend their own likes and dislikes in favour of the 'likes and dislikes of Allāh' in terms of what He has prescribed for us.
- He endeavored to remove from his muridūn any desire to show up or be visible {*aḍḥ-dḥuhūr*} either in the form of putting on outer signs in the form of outer clothing or in internal boastfulness as to their imagined degree of asceticism {*zuhd*}.
- He directed his muridūn to turn their minds and hearts from the ordinary to the sublime.
- His method married the general and the specific. Thus while he spoke of the overall sickness of the time he also cured each of his students of their specific sickness.



*Masjid of 'Abū-l-Abbas al Mursī in Alexandria and surrounding buildings,  
including many Shādhḍhuli maqamāt*

## THE SCHOLAR



Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhulī was himself a whole school of knowledge, from which took everyone who came into contact with him, according to their degree and capacity. He was a complete school of knowledge {*madrastatu-l-ʿilmiyah mutakāmilah*} in both the outer and the inner sciences. Thus he used to give formal legal opinions {*fatāwin*} as well as teach the ‘taste’ {*dhawq*} of the the Ṣūfīs. In his teaching there was neither contradiction nor conflict between the Law {*ash-sharīʿah*} and Spiritual Truth {*al-haqīqah*}. He took the way of al-Junayd, who said, “Our knowledge is built on the Qurʾān and the Sunnah.” Thus both the people of outer knowledge and the people of inner knowledge took from our Shaykh. Everyone took and everyone received according to their ability and degree.

Sidī Abū-l-ʿAbbās inherited both.

The folk of the School of Abū-l-Ḥasan know that it was Sidī Abū-l-ʿAbbās who originally made known and circulated the sciences {*ʿulūm*} of his Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan. They also knew that it was he who recorded the litanies and orisons {*ʿawrād*} as well as unveiling the secrets hidden within them.

As Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh said, “No one spoke with him on any branch of knowledge without finding him so knowledgeable that the one who heard him speak would think that Sidī Abū-l-ʿAbbās only knew that branch and not ḥadīth and tafsīr and so on.” He also said, “We participate with the fuqahāʾ in what they know but they do not participate with us in what we know.”

In the realm of the outer sciences {*al-ʿulūmu-dh-dhāhirah*} he had certain favourite books from which he used to like to read and teach. Among them were:

- In the Basic Principles of the Religion {*ʿuṣūlu-d-dīn*} his favourite book was *The Sure Guidance* {*al-ʿIrshād*} by ʿImām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī {d478/1085} which deals with tawḥīd, debate and disputation {*al-jadl*}, and general discussion {*an-niqāsh*}. This book is highly esteemed by the Ashʿarite School and the People of the Sunnah {*ʾahli-s-sunnah*}. It is not regarded as a particularly ‘easy’ book for the generality of readers or, for that matter, the scholars themselves.
- In the area of the study of Prophetic Sayings {*al-ḥadīth*} he preferred *The Lamps* {*al-Māṣābiḥ*}. It is similar to *The Awakening of Desire and The Intimidation* {*at-Targhīb wa at-Tarhīb*} and *The Garden of the Wholly Righteous* {*ar-Riyāḍu-s-Ṣāliḥīn*}. *The Lamps* was written by the faithful ʿImām al-Baghawī, who was a great faqīh from the school of ʿImām ash-Shāfi, may Allāh be content with him. ʿImām al-Baghawī died in Merv in 516 Hijri.
- In Jurisprudence {*al-fiqh*} he preferred two very well-known books: *The Rectification* {*at-Tadhīb*} and *The Message* {*ar-Risālah*}. The Shaykh held that a proper faqīh is one, “for whom the veils of the eye of the heart {*al-ḥijāb ʿan ʿayni-l-qalb*} have been lifted and who sees the Kingdom {*al-malakūt*} of his Lord.” These books on the sciences of transactions and works {*ʿulūmu-l-mu-ʿāmalah*} were only occasionally referred to by the Shaykh and then only when there was a direct need to precisely clarify or reference a particular point.
- In the realm of the explanation {*tafsīr*} of the Qurʾān, the book he preferred was the same one preferred by his Shaykh, Sidī Abū-l-Ḥasan: *The Succinct Entries* {*al-Muḥarrar al-Wājiz*}.



- In the realm of ṭaṣawwuf his preferred books were:

*The Message* of al-Qushayrī<sup>58</sup> {*ar-Risālatu-l-Qushayriyah*}, which to him was a ladder-he could ascend to open out his own illuminations {*ʾishrāqātah*}, as can be seen in the following story told in *The Secret Pearls* {*ad-Durratu-l-ʾAsrār*}, “The righteous Shaykh and ʿĀlim Jamālu-d-dīn Yūsuf al-ʿUrāmī told me in al-Qāhirah in the year 710 of the Hijrah that after Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan died, Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās used to come to al-Qāhirah during the season when the Nile was in full flood. Every year he would stay in a masjid in ad-Dukkah<sup>59</sup> as, in the past, had been the custom of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan when shuyūkh from many places, not only al-Qāhirah, would gather around him to benefit from his barakah and his knowledge and also to benefit from his generous states.

“In this year Sīdī Abū-l-ʿAbbās came as usual to the blessed masjid and a number of notables from al-Qāhirah and other places in Mṣr including esteemed members of the fuqahāʾ and the ʿulemāʾ were gathered around him. Someone said to him, ‘Oh Shaykh, as you know Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh be pleased with him, always met us during his visits and spoke to us on the Generous Bestowal of Truth {*mawāhibu-l-ḥaqq*}. Now you have been placed in his seat {*maqāmahu*} and we would like to benefit from your talk and also to be reminded again of the words of Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, may Allāh have Mercy on him and be contented with him.

“He said to them, ‘Tomorrow morning ʾinshaʾllāh, we shall come to you,’ and ordered me to go into the city of al-Qāhirah and fetch him a copy of *ar-Risālatu-l-Qushayriyah*. [The next morning] we reached the Masjid of Sayyidnā ʿUmar Ibn al-ʿAṣ and found it filled with notables and esteemed members of the fuqahāʾ and the ʿulemāʾ. The Shaykh said to me, ‘There are two types of men here: critics and believers {*muntaqid wa muʿtaqid*},’ and then he went on to say, ‘Let us sit in the eastern end of the masjid.’

“After we were seated he said to me, ‘Open *al-Qushayrī* and read from whatever page you turn,’ and I opened the book to the chapter on Insightful Discernment {*firāsah*} and began to read the opening sentences, and he ordered me to shut the book and began the lesson {*ad-dars*}, saying, ‘Insightful Discernment is of four types: The first is the firāsah of the believers {*muʾminīn*}, the second is the firāsah of the certain {*muqīnīn*}, the third is the firāsah of the friends of Allāh {*ʾawliyāʾullāh*} and the fourth is the firāsah of the veracious {*ṣiddiqīn*}. As for the firāsah of the believers, its state is such and such and its support is thus and thus,’ and he proceeded to give us a wonderful lesson. He then moved on to the firāsah of the friends of Allāh and all that he said came from the realm of given knowledge rather than acquired knowledge {*mūhūb ghayri maksūb*}. He astounded the hearts of all the listeners and continued speaking without stop until the call {*ʾaḍḥan*} for *ṣalātu-dh-dhuhr* {the mid-day worship}. The people were weeping and sweat was pouring down his face and beard. When he heard the *aḍḥan* he came back to himself and said, “And as for the firāsah of the ṣiddiqīn...” and from this I understood that the Qushayrī’s *Risālah* was a point from which he plunged into the oceans of inspired knowledge {*al-maʿrifatu-l-ʾilhāmiyah*}.”

- *The Revival of Religious Knowledge* {*ʾIhyāʾ ʿUlūmi-d-dīn*} is a book esteemed by all the Ṣūfīs. The Shaykh said of it, following the opinion of his Shaykh, “Through the ʾIhyāʾ you inherit knowledge {*al-ʿilm*},” and of the author, al-ʾImām Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, may Allāh be content with him, he said, “We testify that he was of the Great Tellers of Truth {*bi-ṣ-ṣiddiqiyatu-l-ʿaḍḥimī*}.”

<sup>58</sup> Published in English under the title, *Principles of Sūfism by al-Qushayrī* translated from the Arabic by B.R. bon Schlegell and published by the Mizan Press of Berkely, California, 1992/ Abū-l-Qasim al-Qushayrī {b.376/986}

<sup>59</sup> or perhaps ad-Dikkah? Not clear from text.



- Of the book *The Nourishment of the Heart* {*Qūttu-l-Qulūb*} by ʿAbū Ṭālib al-Makki he said, following the saying of his Shaykh, “This book endows you with light.”
- The book *Seal of the Friends* {*Khatimu-l-ʿAwliyāʾ*} by al-Hakīm at-Tirmidhī {d. c.295/908} is a book that has attracted not only the Ṣūfīs, for it has raised a great deal of vigorous discussion and controversy across the entire spectrum of the thinking Muslim world. It has been heavily criticized and strongly defended.

The ʾImām al-Kabīr {*sic*}, Muḥyiddīn Ibn al-ʿArabī, may Allāh have mercy on him, wrote at length on it and Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās as well as his Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan were both attracted to it. Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh said in this context that, “Both he and his Shaykh greatly esteemed ʾImām ar-Rabbānī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Tirmidhī. The Shaykh had great respect for his writings and said, ‘He is one of the ʾawṭād {tent pegs}<sup>60</sup>.’”

- *The Realities* {*al-Ḥaqāʾiq*} by as-Salmī was another of his favourites. Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh used to read it to his Shaykh and when he got to the part of the book where as-Salmī said that, “The minds of the rational {*ʿaqulu-l-ʿaqlāʾi*} end in perplexity {*al-ḥayrah*},” the Shaykh said, “With those who are ascertained by the truth of reality {*al-muḥaqiqīn*} there is no perplexity, though there may be with the believers {*al-muʾminīn*}.”

Although Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās read these books many times over, and it is worth mentioning here that he had a powerful command of the Arabic language and often would correct mistakes he found in the works he read, he said, “By reading these books of the Ṣūfīs we become aware of the gifts that Allāh has bestowed upon us from His Lights.”

Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās ended up by giving us pearls from his oceans which were redolent with the scent of his tranquil and noble self. Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, writing about his Shaykh, puts it beautifully when he says, “As to his knowledge of gnosis and the innermost secrets {*ʿulūmu-l-mārifah wa-l-ʾasrār*}, he was both its pole {*al-quṭb*} and its shining sun. When you listen to his words you would say that these are the words of a man who is at home in the unseen {*al-ghayb*}. He is far more conversant with the news of the people of heaven than he is with the people of the earth. I have heard it said on more than one occasion that Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan used to say of him, ‘Abū-l-ʿAbbās knows the roads of the sky better than you know the lanes of al-ʾIskandariyah.’”

If you listened to his speech you only heard him talking about the highest and most refined subjects.

He would speak on such subjects as the Great Intellect {*al-ʿaqli-l-ʾakbār*}, The Most Sublime Name {*al-ʾismu-l-ʿaḍīm*}, The Four Disciplines {*shabatu-l-ʿarbaʿ*}, The Names of Allāh {*ʾasmāʾu-llāhi-l-ḥusnā*}, The Circles of Friends {*dawāʾiru-l-ʾawliyāʾ*}, The Letters {*al-harūf*}, The Stations of the People of Certainty {*maqāmātu-l-muqinīn*}, The Angels Brought Near Round the Throne {*al-ʾamlāk al-muqar-abīn ʿanda-l-ʿarsh*}, The Day of Destiny {*yawmu-l-muqādir*}, The Nature of Planning {*shaʾni-t-tadbīr*}, Knowledge of the Beginning {*ʿulūmu-l-bidaʾ*}, Knowledge of the Determination of Things that will Be {*ʿulūmu-l-mashīyyiʾah*}, The Nature of the Handclasp {*shaʾni-l-qabḍah*}, The Men of the Handclasp {*rijālu-l-qabḍah*}, Knowledge of the Solitary ones {*ʿulūmu-l-ʾifrād*}, What Will Be on the Day of Reckoning, and the Actions of Allāh toward His Worshippers in the Realm of His Patience, Mercy, Bestowals and Revenge.

Such were a few of the subjects and areas of knowledge beloved by Sīdī Mursī Abū-l-ʿAbbās and he never tired of speaking of them.

<sup>60</sup> one of the degrees of the spiritual hierarchy which form the Invisible Government. The ʾawṭād are four in number and are located in the four ‘corners’ of the world and actively assist the Pole and his two helpers in their duties.

As for the Sciences of Behavioral Transactions {*‘ulūmu-l-mu‘amalah*} covering Exchanges, Procedures, Conduct, etc.<sup>61</sup> he believed that the Masters of this knowledge were so numerous that it should not constitute the focus of *his* attention. Sidī Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh said, “Shaykh Abū-l-‘Abbās, may Allāh be content with him, would rarely speak about the *‘ulūmu-l-mu‘amalah* and then only when people were in need. He used to say, ‘...yet few are the People of the Truth,’ for as Allāh has said:

قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

QUR-RABBĪ ‘A‘LAMU BI-‘IDDATIHĪ-MMĀ YA‘LAMU HUM ‘ILLĀ QALĪL

Say, ‘My Lord knows their number. None knows them save a few.

{18:22}

‘And the People of Allāh are a cave<sup>62</sup> for the affairs of people but few of the people know it.’”

Sidī Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh said about his Shaykh, “He combined the Sciences of the Heavens, the Letters and the Circles {*‘ulūmu-s-samā’i wa-l-ḥarūf wa-d-dawā’ir*}. He rekindled the light of knowledge after it had faded and clarified the secrets of the subtle dispensations after they had been obscured.”

Whilst it is true that the Shaykh was deeply involved in ṭaṣawwuf and its sciences it is also important to recall here the following testimony by Sidī Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh, “I accompanied the Shaykh for twelve years and I never heard one word from him that was contrary to the Shari‘ah.”

Shaykh Abū-l-‘Abbās was one of those few who excel in the outer sciences {*‘ulūmu-dh-dhāhir*} as well as the inner sciences {*‘ulūmu-l-bāṭin*} yet — and in this matter he exactly followed in the footsteps of his Shaykh — he never wrote a single book<sup>63</sup>.

The reason for this is that the knowledge of such men is the Knowledge of Realisation, Actualisation, Implementation, Accomplishment, Ascertainment and Confirmation {*‘ulūmu-t-tahqīq*}, which is beyond the comprehension of most people. The Shaykh often said that, “All that has been written in the books of the Ṣūfis is but a few drops from the vast Ocean of Realisation {*bahru-t-tahqīq*}.”

In order to fully round out the picture of Shaykh Abū-l-‘Abbās as an ‘alim we must also say something about his poetry for, indeed, he was a poet who created a poetry of subtle meanings and soaring ascents to the heavens of the Spirit {*samā’i-r-rūḥ*}. In this context he once wrote to one of his muridūn, saying,

“May Allāh cause your soul to reach Him. May He enlarge your knowledge of the Unseen {*al-ghayb*}. Someone has asked me for a poem concerning the connection of the soul with the body, its confinement within its own destiny {*al-ḥadhdh*}, its pregnancy with covetous desire {*ash-shawah*} and its ardent craving for union {*al-jam‘*}. I replied with these few lines,

<sup>61</sup> this is a traditional area of fiqh dealing with everyday life transactions which are extensively covered in all of their many intricate and convoluted permutations by the various Schools {*madhāhib*} of Jurisprudence.

<sup>62</sup> The āyat is from the Chapter of the Cave {*Surūratu-l-Kahf*} which describes {in part} a group of young believing men who flee from the corrupt and corrupting times in which they live and take refuge in a cave.

<sup>63</sup> though we do have a record of some of his Ṣāḥib and ‘Ad‘iyah and these are included in the Arabic section of this book.

If you were asking us about pure knowledge  
about the clinging of the soul to the body  
Its bondage to fortune and its share of worldly diversion  
until at last it becomes accustomed to its own sickness  
and the decadence of its own discernment,  
even though it knows the difference between good and evil.  
Its inherent clinging to passion and lust  
which drives it finally to the darkness of regret.  
About the truth that in the root of its substance  
is a quality that can never be changed into an idol.  
  
Listen then to this knowledge known only to the few  
do not be taken in by those of shallow eloquence.  
It is with Allāh that the essence of the soul  
is established in the clarity of truth.  
You ask me for knowledge  
that is not gained by understanding or intellect  
but by the Light to which all minds have knelt  
but of which the majority are blind and cannot see.  
Take it from the truth of which you are not ignorant  
and I am one clearly confirmed in and by that truth.  
Take your knowledge from Reality  
and do not be veiled by its picture in the world of the manifest  
The original nature of the soul is a secret  
not attained by the mind wandering in illusion  
but if it can be manifested in the rulers  
the people can become accustomed to living with it.  
So as to say, slaves of Allāh fulfill  
orders placed on them before creation.  
The soul is in a state of descending  
in the direction Adam took with Eve.  
The spirit is rising in its ascent

to the station of knowledge and subtle grants.

Through the veil the light approached

as though it were descending between water and flesh.

Its example in terms of sublimity

is the clarity of its mirror.

Its fineness is concealed in the way

the secret is concealed in its openness.

It is an olive the oil of which

is light to the one who manages to press it.

The fire of its calling is water to one who drinks it.

It spreads its guidance in the universe of being.

In the sense of clarity you are all

light veiled as water is veiled in milk.

Just so the worshipper is veiled in the graciousness of the Worshipped

whose knowledge of time and reality is so very precise.

He wrote to ʿAḥmad ʿAbdullāh Jamālu-d-dīn on the Adherence to Virtue {*at-tamsik bi-faḍāʾil*}:

If you want knowledge about the best way of travelling

Then know it is abstinence in the world  
coupled with right behaviour.

Worship Allāh in perfect contentment wherever you may be

in order to gain the reward of the People of Endowments.

Those of Walāyah, Hidāyah and Taqwāh<sup>64</sup> are my Masters

Through them I venture in time and they do not perish.

Yā Sīdī ʿAḥmad, never forget your life is with them.

Cause your spirit to become their witness  
for the spirit is the sovereign of the body.

Place their attributes in your being.

and you will gain outwardly and inwardly.

Allāh knows that I advise you

neither for praise nor for gain.

Allāh is my Support and it is He Who confirmed me.

He is my help in all matters as He Himself assures.

Sīdī Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh said he found the following lines in the Shyakh's own handwriting:

<sup>64</sup> Spiritual Authority, Guidance and God-consciousness or, perhaps, God-fearingness.

Have you any news of Laylah?<sup>65</sup>

She by whom those who are dead and decayed  
are given life and resurrected?

My relation with her is an old one

but I no longer give her the love she is due.

In the past I was visited by her vision.

Why now is her image absent?

Is she resting in the shade of her shadow

or is it the infirmity of imagery that does not allow her to be?

The sun is lit from Laylah's face.

That sun which dazzles the eyes.

She is veiled by the raising of her veil.

Is it not strange that her unveiling is veiling?

The Shaykh said, may Allāh be content with him, "Allāh has shown me angels kneeling down to Adam, peace be upon him, I took my share and in this respect I say,

My form has melted and my annihilation is confirmed.

In the sublimity of my secret the sun of my illumination rose.

I descended into the primal universe

revealing the vestige of attributes upon purification.

My purity resembles the sun when it shines forth.

My essence is concealed in the night of my own being.

I am the meaning of existence at the point of origin

he who see me kneels to my splendour.

I am a clear light to the Family of Light

See me as I am for I have taken off my veil.

He was an ʿālim in many realms; Qurʾānic Explanation and Exegesis, the Sayings and Life of the Holy Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, the Divine Law as well as in the realm of *taṣawwuf*. His password was the password of the Ṣūfī of all times as it should be for all Muslims at all times.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

QUR-RABBĪ ZIDNĪ ʿILMĀ

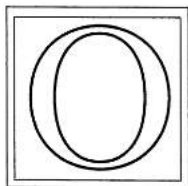
Say, 'My Lord increase me in knowledge'

{20:114}

<sup>65</sup> Laylah is the night and the black light {*nuru-l-ʾaswād*} and the deepest folds of the heart {*suwaidā-l-qalb*}, By extension all that is esoteric, concealed, veiled, robed, hidden, precious, sacred as, { for example } the black veils of the Kaʿabah.



## THE WORKER



One of the most visible characteristics of the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, was his willingness to confront things face to face {*kifāh*} and work them through. Because all of his deeds were, in the final analysis, directed towards Allāh, all of his actions were, without a doubt — worship {*‘ibādah*}. His entire life was marked by an enormous effort in all fields and this vast effort enabled him to personally reach near to Allāh and at the same time it led to the uplift of an entire people and, without a doubt, it may be said that it led to the uplift of the entire world.

His work began first of all with himself and then encompassed his family and then his friends and his neighbours and then, after the Hijrah,<sup>66</sup> it spread to the entire Arabian peninsula and, in time, it encompassed the entire world. All of this struggle, this effort, this toil was solely for Allāh. Indeed when the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, died there was food only for one day in his house and his shield was in hock. Allāh ordered him to say,

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

‘INNA ṢALĀTĪ WA NUSUKĪ WA MAHYATĪ WA MAMĀTĪ LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-‘ĀLAMĪN

*Truly my prayers and my acts of worship and my life and my death are for Allāh, Lord of the Worlds*  
{6:162}

He himself said, "Surely deeds are [judged] by their intentions {*‘innamā al-‘amāl bi-niyāt*}. Whose intention it is to emigrate to Allāh and His Messenger then his emigration {*hijrah*} will be for Allāh and His Messenger. Whose emigration is for the world or the sake of taking a woman in marriage then his emigration will be for them."

He also said that, among the branches of faith, the least sign of faith was "to remove an obstacle or impediments from the path," and in another place he said, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, "The morsel {of food} you place in the mouth of your wife for the sake of Allāh {*li-wajhi-llāh*} is charity {*ṣadaqah*} and making love to your wife is means of reward {*ṭhawāb*}."

And when he said that his companions were astonished saying, "What. Shall we really be rewarded for quenching our passions {*shahwah*}?"

He replied "He who does so by the forbidden {*ḥarām*} commits a sin {*wazara*} and he who does so by way of what is permissible {*ḥalāl*} shall be rewarded {*‘ajara*}."

<sup>66</sup> *hijra* from *hajara* = he emigrated, he separated, he left behind, he vacated, he relinquished. After thirteen years of working to fulfill the mission in his home city of Makkah and giving witness to a people, many of whom opposed his mission, the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, left for the city of al-Yathrib {later Madinah} three days north by camel, where they offered the Messenger, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, refuge from the ill-treatment that he had received from his kinsfolk in Makkah, acceptance of his prophetic mission. and a place where he could carry out his mission without hindrance. See *Muhammad : His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*: by Dr Martin Lings, published jointly by George Allen & Unwin and The Islamic Texts Society, London, UK 1983

There is also a sense in which *hijrah* means to flee from evil, or to abandon evil. Though this may seem to be metaphorical, it is only too real for those people who are born Muslim and go astray and then return to ‘Islām. Similarly for non-Muslims who embrace ‘Islām there is a sense of making *hijrah* from the environment in which they had lived and its evils.

Thus actions {*amal*} and struggle {*kifāh*} for the sake of Allāh are counted to be among the virtues of ʾIslām and are amply present in the sunnah of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him. The great Ṣūfīs followed along that blessed way and their lives were similarly characterised by attention and implementation of similar actions {*amal*} and struggle {*kifāh*} for the sake of Allāh

Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās took that road and all who have come after him in the way of the Shādhḍhulīyah have taken that road.

Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh said that after he had made contact with the Shaykh and had regularly begun to attend meetings {*majālisah*} he heard some students [of the shārīʿah school] say, “Anyone who follows the Ṣūfī shuyūkh will never increase their knowledge of the revealed sciences {*al-ʿulūmu-dh-dhāhir*}.” By this he understood that the students were saying that the shuyūkh of the Ṣūfīs only directed their students towards acts of worship {*ibādah*} and avoided directing them towards knowledge that is to be gained from books {*al-ʿulūmu-l-maktasib*}.

In this context Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh relates that whilst he was a student among students he hated “to miss the lessons of grammar {*naḥwa*}, transactions {*ṣarf*}, jurisprudence {*fiqh*} or the fundamentals {*uṣūl*} but at the same time I hated to miss keeping company with the Shaykh. I went to him and found him eating meat mixed with vinegar. I said to myself, ‘I hope the Shaykh puts a morsel in my mouth with his own hand,’ and just as I completed thinking this thought the Shaykh put a morsel in my mouth and said to me, ‘When a trader {*tājir*} keeps company with us we don’t tell him to leave off trading and come to us, neither do we tell the craftsman {*sāhib sanʿah*} to leave his craft nor do we tell the student {*ṭālib*} to leave his studies. On the contrary we agree to any situation in which Allāh has placed the person, for what Allāh has decreed for the person from our hands will reach them.”

In this same way you can never find the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, telling the trader to leave off his trading, nor did he tell any of his companions to abandon their profession or their work. On the contrary he consented that they continue on in their trade or craft or study and, rather than having them leave their work, he ordered them to be conscious of Allāh in the midst of it.

But as such things go, it seems that in time Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh became tired of his studies to the point that what he had once despised became desirable to him and what he had avoided now attracted him, and so he went to the Shaykh determined to leave everything in order to devote himself solely to keeping his company. He thought that by leaving everything and only staying by the Shaykh, he would ‘arrive’ {*wuṣūl*} to Allāh. The Shaykh said to him {even though he had mentioned none of this to him},

“Yā Sidī. A man from Qūs<sup>67</sup> named Ibn Nashī who was a teacher used to accompany me. One day he came to me saying, ‘Ya Sidī! Shall I leave my work and just keep your company?’ I said to him, ‘The matter is not at all like that. Stay where Allāh has stationed you. What is destined to reach you from our hands will reach you.’ The Shaykh then went on to say that this was the case with all of the veracious ones {*ṣiddiqīn*}. They never leave anything until The Truth {*al-ḥaqq*}, praised be He, removes them from their post.”

Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh continues on to say, “I left him feeling that Allāh had cleaned all such thoughts from my mind. They were like a garment that I had taken off and thereafter I was content with the station in which Allāh placed me.”

<sup>67</sup> a small town in upper Egypt

It is well known that Shaykh Abū-l-‘Abbās, like his Shaykh before him, did not like to accept a student {*murīd*} unless he had a craft or profession. He himself, once again following in the footsteps of his Shaykh, became a breeder and raiser of horses, personally paying attention to their needs and requirements for food and water, and in regards to the rule concerning right livelihood and earning a living he once gave a wonderful lesson based on certain verses {*‘āyāt*} concerning Maryam, the mother of the Prophet ‘Īsa, peace be upon them both. He said, "Whenever Zakariyya <sup>68</sup>, peace be upon him, entered the place in which Maryam was praying he found that she was provisioned with food. He asked her from whence she obtained her food and she replied with the words placed on her tongue by Allāh,

هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

HUWA MIN ‘INDA-LLĀH ;

‘INNA-LLĀHA YARZUQU MAŶY-YASHĀĀ’U BI-GĥAYRI ḤISĀB

*It is from Allāh*

*Allāh provides to whom He Wills without counting.*

{3:37}

“Later during the time she was pregnant she went out into the wilderness to give birth.

فَاجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جَذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ  
قَالَتْ يَلَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَنْسِيًّا  
فَنَادَاهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكَ تَحْتِكَ سَرِيًّا  
وَهُزِّي إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا  
فَكُلِي وَاشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي عَيْنًا

FA‘AJĀĀ’AHĀ-L-MAKĥĀDU ‘ILĀ JIDĥ‘I-N-NAKĥLAH :

QĀLAT YĀLAYTANĪ MITTU QABĀLA HĀDĥĀ WA KUNTU NASIAM-MANSIYYĀ

FA-NĀDĀHĀ MIN TAḤTIHĀĀ-L-

‘ALLĀ TAḤZANĪ QADĀ JA‘ALA RABBUKA TAḤTAKI SARIYYĀ

WA HUZZIĪ ‘ILAYKI BI-JIDĥ‘I-N-NAKĥLATI TUSĀQITĀ ‘ALAYKA RUṬABĀŶ JANNIYYĀ

FA-KULĪ WA-Sĥ-RABĪ WA QARRĪ ‘AYNĀ

*And the pangs of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree.*

*She said, ‘Would that I had died before this and was a thing forgotten, utterly forgotten.’*

*Then {a voice} cried out to her from below,*

*‘Grieve not! Your Lord has placed a stream beneath you.*

*And shake the trunk of the palm towards you; it will drop fresh dates upon you.*

*Eat and drink and let your eyes be gladdened.*

{19:23-6}

The Shaykh said, “In this connection most people give an unsatisfactory explanation or an interpretation not worthy of consideration. They say that originally her love was only for Allāh but that after being pregnant and then giving birth her love was divided. This could never have been the case as she was a veracious one {*siddiqah*} <sup>69</sup> as proven by the Words of Allāh:

<sup>68</sup> The Prophet, uncle, mentor and protector of Maryam, peace be upon them both

<sup>69</sup> *sadaqa* = to speak the truth, be sincere, to be right, to fit exactly, to hold true, to fulfill one’s promise

وَأُمُّ صَدِيقَةٍ

WA ʿUMMUHŪ ṢIDDĪQAH

*And his mother was a ṣiddīqah*

{3:37}

"The ṣaddiqīn and the ṣaddiqāt never move from one state except to a higher state. In her earlier state she took from the Unseen without effort and without accounting. When her certainty {*yaqīn*} was complete she was placed in the state of seeking her provision through direct action — shaking the palm. The latter state is higher and more complete than the first state."

In the same vein we quote the Shaykh's explanation of the saying of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him:

"A truthful trader {*at-tājiru-ṣ-ṣudūq*} will accompany the prophets, the veracious ones, the martyrs {*aṣḥ-ṣḥuhadāʾ*} and the wholly correct ones {*aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*} on the Day of Judgment."

The Shaykh said, "He will accompany the Prophets, peace be upon them all, because part of their task is to be honest and give sound advice and so he will accompany them because he also was honest and gave sound advice. He will accompany the veracious ones because they are pure, inwardly and outwardly and so too was he pure inwardly and outwardly. He will accompany the martyrs because it is the task of the martyr to strive and struggle {*jahada*} and the task of the honest trader is to strive and struggle {*jihād*} against his own passion and the whispering of Shayṭān. He will accompany the wholly correct ones because it is their task to fulfill the permitted {*ḥalāl*} and to avoid the forbidden {*ḥarām*}. This also must a truthful trader do."

From these few examples we hope that it is clear that there is nothing along the Sūfī way as outlined in the School of Abū-l-Ḥasan aṣḥ-Shādhidhūlī which in any way contradicts or is contrary to the effort and struggle that is part of earning a living or having a sufficiency or even attaining great wealth, as long as the means employed are ḥalāl.

Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan, Allāh sanctify his secret, was in the latter part of his life the owner of large tracts of land which he farmed. He said, "Every walī has a veil {*ḥijāb*}. My veil is earning a living."

Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh relates the following story about a very rich man whose life was in his hand and not in his heart. He says,

"The veil of a walī may also be vast riches and his very openness to life. A shaykh once said, 'There was a man known for his asceticism who lived in the Maghrib and who was also very hard working. He lived on what he fished from the sea. He was pious and men called him a shaykh and thier teacher.

"From what he was able to catch he first fed his family and the rest he gave as charity {*ṣadaqah*}. A friend of his was planning to travel to another city.

"The fisher man said to his friend, 'If you visit the city please visit my brother and give him my salāms and ask him to make supplication {*duʿāʾ*} to Allāh for me, for he is a wālī of Allāh the Most High.'



“Well, when his friend entered that city he asked about the brother of the poor fisher man and was taken to his home, which he found to be a house suitable for a prince. He was quite astonished at this, for the poor pious ascetic lived such a simple life and it seemed his brother was living quite a different life. Upon asking for the whereabouts of the brother of the pious fisher man he was told that he was visiting the Sultān, and his astonishment waxed even greater upon hearing this. After some time the brother of the fisher man shaykh returned riding a magnificent horse and dressed in very elegant robes. Indeed he himself looked like a Sultān and he rode surrounded by richly caparisoned outriders to the degree that the procession of his arrival was more than that of a Sultān — it was like that of a King.

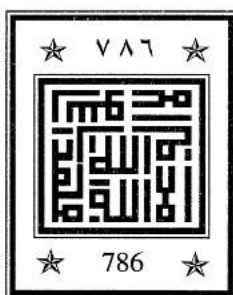
“Upon seeing such pomp and panoply the man began to think twice about conveying the salāms of his shaykh and he thought of leaving without fulfilling his promise. But he thought better of it when he remembered the pure and simple piety of his friend and the fact that he had made a promise.

“He asked permission to enter and was given leave to do so and upon entering the house he was amazed to find it staffed with slaves and servants moving within a very sumptuous milieu. Finally he was ushered by a servant into the presence of the brother of his friend, to whom he said, ‘Your brother, the pious shaykh sends his salāms.’

“He was then asked, ‘Do you come from his district?’ to which the man replied in the affirmative. The man then asked him if on his return he would convey a message to his brother and the man said that he would and asked him to relate the message that he wished conveyed. The rich man said, ‘Say that I ask my brother, ‘How long will you concern your self with the world {*ad-dunyā*}? How long do you intend to follow along this path? When will your passion for it cease?’ As the man listened to these words his astonishment, which began when he first laid eyes on the rich man, was complete. He thought to himself, ‘By Allāh! This is the most astounding thing I have ever heard.’

“When he returned to his district he went to visit his friend who immediately asked, ‘Have you seen my brother?’ to which he replied that he had. His friend then asked, ‘Well, what did he have to say?’ and the man replied, ‘Nothing.’ His poor fisherman however persisted until finally the man told him everything. At this point he began to weep and wept for a long time and finally said, ‘My brother has spoken the truth. Allāh has washed his heart of worldliness and left it outside in his hand. I still grasp for it with my hand and the passion for it remains in my heart.’”

In the world there are people who think that the Ṣūfis distance themselves from the world of effort and labour, whereas in reality this is contradicted by what is known of their lives, which for the most part are unremitting struggles in the way of Allāh and calling people to ʾIslām. It is they, and the truthful traders, who have for the most part spread ʾIslām throughout Africa and Asia and now in the West. They have worked for the rectification of social behaviour and the revivification of ʾIslām. They were and are examples of guidance by their words and through their actions and behaviour. Their ideal has always been the sunnah of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him.





## THE ṢŪFĪ



s a Muslim, Abū-l-ʿAbbās is a Ṣūfī before he is anything else. He is a Ṣūfī by and in his very nature. He is a Ṣūfī by his thought, by his behaviour, by his manners, by his upbringing, by his culture and, as his Shaykh, Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan, was so fond of observing, by his spiritual knowledge {*maʿrifah*} which enabled him to know “the pathways of the heavens better than the roads of the earth.”

He was known as a man of knowledge and, as is often the case with people who become ‘known’, people began to come to him with various petitions and demands. He was always careful to tell them very frankly that he had no intention of petitioning anyone from among the people of influence but that he would be pleased to make supplication for them, that Allāh might fulfill their needs and wants. If this satisfied them he would proceed to maké duʿāʾ on their behalf.

On the strength of Allāh’s conformation {*bi-tawfiqi-llāh*} we shall now try to make clear the views of the Shaykh on taṣawwuf, its definitions and what some of the Ṣūfīs have said. At the same time we will try to open out explanations {*tafsīr*} of some Qurʾānic-āyāt as well as explications {*sharḥ*} of some of the Prophetic utterances {*ḥadīth*} from a Ṣūfic perspective.

### • Ṣūfism — the name and its meaning

As for the word Ṣūfism or Ṭasawwuf and its meaning, he said that people differ on the etymology of the word. “Some say it is derived from — *ṣūf* — meaning wool, because wool is the cloth preferred by the wholly good {*aṣ-ṣaliḥīn*} for their garments. Others say it is derived from the word — *aṣ-ṣaffah* — which was the place in the masjid of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, in Madinah where the People of the Platform {*ahli-s-saffah*}<sup>70</sup> congregated. The best explanation, though, is that the word is a description in four letters of the deeds and behaviour of the one who is pure and clear {*ṣafī*}<sup>71</sup>. Thus we say that the one purified {*ṣufī*} by Allāh is the real Ṣūfī.” He then used to recite the following couplet:

*Sāfā fa-ṣūfī hatta samīu-s- ṣūfī*

People differ about the meaning of Ṣūfī

each saying something different than what is known.

I do not give this name other than to a man of strength  
who has been purified until he is pure.

The word has four letters — *Ṣāwd*, *Wāw*, *Fāʾ* and *Yāʾ*

*Ṣāwd* is *Ṣabr* {patience}, *Ṣidq* {honesty} and *Ṣāfā* {purity}

*Wāw* is for *Wajd* {ardour}, *Wudd* {Friendship} and *Wafāʾ* {sincerity}

*Fāʾ* is for *Faqad* {deprivation}, *Faqr* {poverty} and *Fanāʾ* {annihilation}

*Yāʾ* is for the letter that completes<sup>72</sup> it, for when the above are complete the Ṣūfī will be with his Lord.”

<sup>70</sup> The *saffah* was a platform or a bench in the courtyard of the masjid where a number of the companions, many of them who were either quite poor or poor by choice, used to sit to read Qurʾān and give their lives over to prayer and devotion.

<sup>71</sup> *ṣafā* {ṣafw, ṣufūw} = to become cloudless, untroubled, limpid, undisturbed, pure, serene.

<sup>72</sup> *yāʾ* {ي} is the last letter in the Arabic alphabet

### • Returning in repentance — at-tawbah

The first step on the Way {*ṭariq*} to Allāh is at-tawbah, which is the turning back to Allāh in repentance<sup>73</sup>. In the context of *dīn* or religion it means the cessation of wrong actions coupled with the sincere intention {*niyyah*} not to repeat them. The view of the Shaykh on at-tawbah is illustrated in the following story, which is a gloss on a story mentioned in the *Risālāh* of al-Qushayrī.

“Imām Abū-l-Qāsim al-Junayd, may Allāh be content with him, said, ‘I went to see my Shaykh Sārī as-Ṣaḥābī {d.298/810} and found him in an altered state. I asked him, ‘What has changed you so, oh māster {*ʿustādh*}?’ and he replied, ‘A young man came to see me asking what is at-tawbah?’ and I replied that it was not forgetting your misdeeds.’

“‘The young man then said that, ‘If I had been astray and then Allāh brought me into His Presence and Purity — the remembrance of impurity at the time of purity is in itself impure.’”

Sidī Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās related this story and then commented,

“Shaykh Sārī’s words are more complete. He was talking about the stations of the beginning {*mubādīʿu-l-maqāmāt*} of the Way and both al-Junayd and the young man were beginners. That however did not stop them from talking about the station of the pure devotees {*maqāmātu-l-ʿibād*}. The beginning and the end are not the same though the end is found in the beginning in the sense that repentance is always accompanied by abiding peace {*as-sakinah*}, be it at the beginning or the end.

“Shaykh Sārī’s words referred to travellers. The door of repentance is always open to whoever can walk through it to take refuge with Allāh and on this all the Ṣūfis agree. Furthermore they are very careful not to cause anyone to despair of the Mercy {*raḥmah*} of Allāh. For this reason al-Qushayrī began his *Risālāh* by speaking about ʾIbrāhīm ibn ʾĀdham and Ibn ʿIyād because they were neglectful in their beginnings and only later directed themselves to Allāh — and Allāh accepted their return. ..

“Qushayrī thus opened the doors of hope for those of the miridūn who transgressed the Law and were disobedient to Allāh. They made at-tawba. They ceased their mis-deeds and began knocking on the doors of heavenly attention. Had Qushayrī begun with al-Junayd or al-Ṭustarī or al-Ghulām or others who started out straight on the Path to Allāh, people might have said, ‘Who can be like them? They never sinned. They were never disobedient or rebellious.’”

The Shaykh continues opening the doors of hope for the Mercy of Allāh in his explanation of the following saying, “No Ṣūfī will ever be a Ṣūfī until there is no mistake recorded against him for twenty years!” by saying, “This does not mean he will not commit any mistake in twenty years. Rather it means that if he ever does commit a mistake he will cling to Allāh and beg His Forgiveness.

“A mis-deed is not recorded until the Recording Angel sees if the transgressor seeks forgiveness for his mis-deed and makes at-tawbah. If the Angel of the Left begins to record it, the Angel of the Right asks for him to wait on the chance that the sinner may beg for Forgiveness, and the Angel of the Right is over the Angel of the Left.”

<sup>73</sup> *tabā* = to repent, to turn back, to turn away from, to renounce, to forswear

• Obedience and rebellion — aṭ-ṭāʿah wa al-maʿṣiyah

Whatever may be said, there is a clear difference between the rebellion of the believer {*al-muʿmin*} and that of the profligate libertine {*al-fājir*}. The Shaykh says that, “The difference is three-fold. A believer does not set out to disobey prior to his rebelling; he will not be happy when he has and he will not repeat it intentionally. The case of the profligate is entirely different.”

In what follows the Shaykh illustrates the difference between obedience and rebellion, pointing out their completeness and incompleteness, their achievement and failure. He says,

“Know that Allāh has created humans in three parts: the tongue, the sexual organs and the heart. Over each of them He has appointed a guard {*ḥafīdh*}.

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

MĀ YALFIDḥU MIN QŌWLIN ʿILLĀ LADAYHI RAQĪBUN ʿAṬĪD

*Not even a word can he utter but that there is with him an ever-present watcher.*  
{50:18}

وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا أَذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ

WA LĀ TAʿMALŪNA MIN ʿAMALIN

ʿILLĀ KUNNĀ ʿALAYKUM ShUHUDAN ʿIDḥ TUFĪDŪNA FĪH

*And you cannot do a deed  
save that We are the Witness of you when you are doing it*  
{10:61}

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ

WA-ʿLAMUŪ ʾANNA-LLĀHA YAʿLAMU MĀ FĪ ʾANFUSIKUM FA-Ḥ-DḥARŪH

*Allāh knows what is in your selves, so be aware of Him*  
{2:235}

“Allāh requires your sincerity {*wafāʿ*} in all three areas: the sincerity of the heart in your refraining from worldliness, deceit or jealousies; the sincerity of the tongue in your refraining from lies or speaking badly of others in their absence or speaking of things of no importance; sincerity of the sexual organs in your refraining from misdeeds arising from their incorrect use or their use in bringing harm to another Muslim. Who errs with his heart is a hypocrite {*munāfiq*}; who errs with his tongues is one who covers up the Truth {*kāfir*}; who errs with his sexual organs is a rebel {*ʿāṣin*}.”

• the times of people and their duties in them—ʾawqātu-l-ʾinsān wa mawqafatu minhā

Our Shaykh divides the times of people into four different times: the time of bliss or grace {*an-niʿmah*}, the time of trial {*al-baliyah*}, the time of obedience {*aṭ-ṭāʿah*}, the time of rebellion {*al-maʿṣiyah*}. He says,

“Allāh has a claim on you in every time; a claim on you which is your enslavement to Him as your Sustainer or a claim on you which is your worship of Him as your Lord.

“When you are in the time of bliss or grace you should see the benevolence of Allāh upon you and how you have been directed and guided to it. When you are in the time of trial, tribulation and hardship you should accept the Judgment of Allāh and steadfastly endure the time, knowing that acceptance must be coupled with determination in order to avoid passion, for endurance {*ṣabr*} is the stillness of the heart in the Hands of the Lord. The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, said,

— he who was given and was thankful —  
 — he who was afflicted and yet endured —  
 — he who was oppressed but forgave —  
 — he who rebelled and then sought forgiveness —

at which point he fell silent. He was asked, “What will be for him oh Messenger of Allāh?” and he replied, “He is granted secure faith {*li-āman*} and he is guided {*muhtadūn*}.”

• **The fear of Allāh — al-khawf min Allāh**

If you were to ask, “What would cause people to extricate themselves from their negligence in taking the Path to Allāh?” We would answer that this can be accomplished by drawing their attention to the fear of Allāh. As our Shaykh sees it, this fear is of two kinds: the fear of the common people {*al-āmah*} and the fear of the elect {*al-khāṣah*}.

The fear of the common people is the fear of the Fire and the suffering and burning of their bodies.

The fear of the elect is the fear that the garment which they have been given by Allāh should be stained by the filth of deviation {*al-mukhālafah*} from the wishes of Allāh.

The meaning of this is that the common people have not yet entered into the realm where they directly witness the bestowals of Allāh such as true Belief, true Surrender, true Knowledge, true Oneness, true Love. They only know that Allāh has promised the Fire for those who disobey so they avoid disobedience because they fear the Fire and the punishments which Allāh has described in His Book. Those who are of the elect are those who have been granted Light that has allowed them to witness the garment of endowments {*malābisu-l-miñān*} which He gave them. It is to these garments that they direct their attention in keeping them pure, for it is their deepest desire to meet Allāh with their garments unstained, immaculate and radiant. They have understood through maʿrifah the meaning of,

وَاِذَا بَلَغَ الْفَطَرُ

WA THĪYABAKA FA-ṬAHHIR

and your garments purify  
 {74:4}

Thus they purified their garment of Faith and Certainty from the filth of mindlessness and deviation.

They understood the meaning of the Words of Allāh,

يَبْنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُورِي سَوَآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا  
وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ

YĀ-BANIĪ ʿĀDAMA

QADĀ ʿANZALNĀ ʿALAYKUM LIBĀSAŶY-YUWARĪ SŌWʾĀTIKUM WA RĪSHĀ  
WA LIBĀSU-T-TAQWĀ DHĀLIKA KHAYR

*Oh children of Adam*

*We have sent down to you garments to cover your sawʾā<sup>74</sup> and as plumage.*

*And the garment of taqwah is better.*

{50:18}

Thus such people travel in the world and raise up the hems of their garments in order to protect them from the stains of this world and specifically the filth of disobedience and rebellion. They do this, not out of fear of the Fires of Hell, but out of their deep regard for that which Allāh has sent down upon them; has bestowed upon them. The Shaykh says, “When the common people fear they become afraid and when they are given hope they become hopeful. When tehelect are afraid they become hopeful and when they have hope they become afraid.”

The meaning of the Shaykh's words, according to Sidi Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, is:

“The common people are stationed on the outside of the matter. If they are afraid they are so because they cannot penetrate to what is beyond worship (ʿibādah) by the light of knowledge as do the People of Allāh who, when they fear, become hopeful because they know that beyond their fear there exist attributes of Allāh which give rise to hope rather than to desperation. They know that when Allāh sends fear upon them it is to bring them closer to His Grace and Bliss.

“When they hope they become afraid because they are afraid of His Unknown Judgment which is beyond all hope. They fear that the hope they feel is but a further test. If they remained only in their outer understanding of hope could they penetrate what is hidden in His Judgment?

Hope {ar-rajāʾ} raises them to the state of fear {al-khawf}. Their experience of the state of expansion, joy and delight {basṭ} causes them to become bereaved and sad for they know well that the basṭ is always a pit. Thus when they are in that state they constantly take refuge with Allāh.”



<sup>74</sup> sawʾā is a word usually translated as nakedness, shame, evil etc. It appears in only three places in al-Qurān, and each time specifically in the context of Adam and Hawā {Eve}, peace be upon them both, directly after their act of rebellion. It has been understood by those of deep insight that this word really refers to the inversion of their paradisiacal bodies to their earthly form. Because of that understanding we leave it untranslated, as also the word 'taqwah' which we have explained elsewhere. It is our hope that in time English, which is a language well suited to borrowing as were Persian and Urdu, will gradually include many words in Arabic {as it did earlier in the realms of science, astronomy, medicine etc} which describe unique spiritual insights, or are specific religious terms that are really untranslatable in a succinct manner.



### • Remembrance — *adh-dhikr*

After *tawbah* — pure and resolute — comes *adh-dhikr* {Remembrance}. Ṣhaykh Abū-l-‘Abbās has many ṣadhkār and ṣawrād, some of which are in the Arabic section of this book, but in essence we can say that the Ṣhaykh recommends the saying of the Name — Allāh — as the greatest Remembrance.

In a letter he sent to a friend he wrote, “Make the Name of Allāh your Remembrance. This name is the Ruler {*as-sultān*} of all the Names. It is both root and fruit. Its root is knowledge and its fruit is light. This light is not only for itself but it is also a light for insight and vision {*kashf wa ‘ayān*}. All of the Names of Allāh are for the creation of the pattern {*li-l-takhlīq*} but His Personal Name — Allāh — is for devotion and attachment {*li-l-ta‘liq*}.”

Sidī Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says, “The meaning of the Ṣhaykh’s words in this instance is that when you call Him, ‘*Yā Halīm*’ {Oh Clement} He will reply to you from that attribute, ‘I am the Clement. Be you my clement worshipper.’ If you call Him by the Name ‘*Yā Karīm*’ {Oh Generous} He will answer, ‘I am the Generous. Be you my generous worshipper.’ And thus it is with all of the Names of Allāh save His Personal Name — Allāh. This Name is for attachment, relationship and devotion because it refers only to Him and means only Him and He is Himself in His Ipseity {*al-ṣuluhiyah*}. It is not a Name or an Attribute that is joined to the created. It is not an attribute which has something which comes after it. It is itself and what it is itself.”

Another extraordinary dimension to His personal name — Allāh — is that in the Arabic language you can drop any letter of the Name and it still refers directly to the Godhead and nothing else.<sup>75</sup>

Allāh	ALLĀHU	ٱللَّه
for the sake of Allāh	LI-LLĀHI	لِلَّهِ
To Him belongs	LAHU	لَهُ
He	HŪW	هُوَ

### • The difference between the Ṣūfī and the Ascetic—*al-farq bayna aṣ-ṣūfī wa az-zāhid*

People often identify the Ṣūfī with the Ascetic. Our Ṣhaykh illustrates the difference between the two by saying, “An ascetic goes from this world {*ad-dunyā*} to the Final world {*al-‘ākhirah*} whereas the knower {*al-‘ārif = aṣ-ṣūfī*} comes from the Final world to this world.” He also says that, “The ascetic is an alien in this world because the Final world is his home, whereas the knower is a stranger {*gharīb*} in the Final world because he is with Allāh.”

Sidī Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says, “If you ask, ‘What is the meaning of the word — stranger — {*gharīb*} and what is the meaning of this same word in the ḥadīth of the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, ‘Islām began as something strange and will return as something strange. Blessed are the strangers’ — you must understand that the word *gharīb* or ‘stranger’ in this context means something or someone who is quite rare {*qillah*} or few in number — for truly those who stand by the Truth are rare and few in number.

<sup>75</sup> There follows in the original Arabic a poem on these letters and their relationship which loses its meaning when translated into English. The chart explicates the essential meaning of the poem.

Those who stand by the religion {*ad-dīn*} are strangers because they are often alone and without anyone to support or help them. The People of the Dīn lead their lives on the basis of their Faith {*al-ʿīmān*} and their Certainty {*al-yaqīn*}. The Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, meant that the People of the Dīn exist by the support of Allāh as His worshippers and His slaves because the people of the world do not support them.

The word *gharīb* for the Shaykh means that for the ascetic the Kingdom of the Final World is disclosed to him so that the Final World becomes the home of his heart and this world becomes strange to him and thus he becomes a stranger {*gharīb*} in this world. Whereas for the knower {*al-ʿārif*}, he is a stranger in the Final World because his secret {*as-sirr*} is with Allāh, which is to say without ‘attribute’, without ‘place’, and without ‘where’. The knowers {*ʿarifīn*} dwell in the Presence {*ḥadrah*} of Allāh, which is to say they are established in the heart {*al-qalb*} — at peace {*yaskūn*} and on them is serenity {*ʿaūn*}.

If they descend to the horizon of implementation {*samāʿi-l-ḥuqqūq*} or to the land of wealth {*al-ʿarḍu-l-ḥudhudh*} they do so by permission {*bi-ʿidhīn*} and with certainty {*bi-tamkīn*}. They do not come down to the land of wealth out of desire {*bi-shahwah*} for gain or sensual gratification {*muṭʿah*} nor do they come down to the realm of implementation through dint of mindlessness {*al-ghaflah*} or shameful behaviour {*bi-sūʾi-l-ʿādab*}, but on the contrary they come down into these realms with politeness {*āʿaddab*} as ordained by Allāh, His Messenger and the Prophets, blessings and peace be upon them all, and the polite ones {*al-mutaʿadibīn*}, and their descent is by necessity {*ʿiqṭidāʿ*} in order that they might fill a space that is vacant in the world.

#### • The ascent to Allāh — al-ʿurūj ʿilla-llāh

People are of two categories in relation to the ascent to Allāh. There are those who reach due to the generosity of Allāh, as He says,

اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

ʿALLĀHU YUJĀTABĪ ʿILAYHI MAʿNY-YASHĀĀ  
WA YAHDĪ ʿILAYHI MAʿNY-YUNĪBĀ

*Allāh raises to Himself whom He wills and Allāh guides to Himself who turns {to Him}*  
{42:13}

Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says in this context, “The meaning of the words of the Shaykh are that there are some people who are motivated {*haraka*} on the journey to Allāh with a resolute zeal {*himmah*} in their pursuit {*ṭalab*}. They journey with great difficulty until they reach the Presence of their Lord.

وَلَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

WA-LLADHĪNA JĀHIDU FĪNĀ LANAHDĪ-YANAHUM SUBULUNĀ

*And those who struggle for Us We shall surely guide to Our Paths.*  
{29:69}

“There are others who come to Allāh by way of His Solicitude {*ʿināyah*} without pursuing the Way and often without assistance {*ʿistaʿdād*}. Of them Allāh says,

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

YAKḥTAṢṢU BI-RAḤMATIHĪ MAŊY-YAŠḥĀĀ'U WA-LLĀHU DHŪ-L-FADLI-L-‘ADḥĪM

*He selects for His Mercy whom He wills and Allāh is of Infinite Bounty*

{3:74}

“The first group are the travellers {*as-sālikīn*} to Allāh. Their state is travelling.

The second group are those attracted {*al-majdhūbīn*} by Allāh. Their state is attraction.

“For whom action {*al-mu‘āmalah*} has been their beginning their end is communion {*al-muwāṣilah*}.

For whom communion has been their beginning their end is action.

“Never imagine that the attracted ones have no path. Rather know that their path is folded up {*maṭwīy*}, compressed and made secret by the infinite solicitude of Allāh so that the attracted one {*al-majdhūb*} passes quickly to Allāh.

“There are those among the Ṣūfis who say that the traveller {*as-sālik*} is more complete than the majdhūb because the traveller has known the path {*aṭ-ṭarīq*} in its beginning and at its end.

“The matter is not as they say. The path has been folded and made secret for the majdhūb and when the path is folded and made secret it does not mean that it does not exist. Rather what does not exist is the toil and the distance. For the majdhūb the road to Makkah is folded up and compressed but the traveller must go every inch of the way.

#### • The yearning — *ash-shawq*

The Ṣaykh, may Allāh be content with him, said, “Yearning {*ash-shawq*} is of two types:

“The first type is the yearning for the Absent {*al-ghaybah*}. This is not resolved, not tranquilly arrived at, save by meeting the Beloved {*al-ḥabīb*}. This is the yearning of the souls {*an-nafūs*}.

“The second type is the yearning of the spirits {*al-arwāḥ*}. This is the longing or yearning to be both present {*al-ḥadūr*} and at the same time to be the seer {*al-mu‘āyanah*}.

“Know that if Allāh raises you up to that station where the presence {*al-ḥadrah*} is accompanied by witnessing {*ash-shuhūd*} — a witnessing unsullied by any infirmity or imperfection {*al-‘alal*} — this is the station in which He introduces Himself to you. As such this is the beginning of real belief {*‘imānan ḥaqīqā*} and it is in this realm that eternity {*al-‘āzal*} descends upon you.

“If it is that He makes you to come down into the realm of struggle {*al-jihād*} and the continuity or persistence of this station {*maqām*} consists of duties, assignments and responsibilities {*at-taklīf*} constrained by imperfections and infirmity {*al-‘alal*}, then know that this is the real surrender {*al-‘islāmu-l-ḥaqīqī*} in which the Reality of Origins {*ḥaqā’iqu-l-‘ibadiḥ*} becomes apparent.

“The man of ḥaqīqah does not care in which of these two realms or stations he is placed.

“It does not matter because in reality {*al-ḥaqīqah*} he knows that it is only on account of one’s adjectival attribute {*aṣ-ṣīfat*} that one leans in one direction or another — between one ‘choice’ and another. It is not the true ‘you’ in

any case, for the attribute is all that stands between one apparent identity and the other. And it is precisely because of this that you have any apparent {*adh-dhāhir*} identity at all or that ‘others’ can see ‘you’. In reality the outward name by which we are known is for the tongue and this outward name is simply the name of that attribute which allows others to see you.

“The name is the reality of the attribute! The attribute {*aṣ-ṣifat*} is the reality of relative existence or being {*al-wujūd*}. The secrets {*al-ʿasrār*} are descending from the True Existentiality {*al-wujūdiyyah*} for the veracious ones {*aṣ-ṣidiqiyah*}. The Manifestation of the Realities {*al-ḥaqāʾiq*} is the unveiling {*mutajaliyah*} of the Divine Attributes {*aṣ-ṣifatu-l-uluhiyah*} which renders visible the Sovereignty {*al-wilāyat*} to those People of the Outer Knowledge of the Name {*ʾahlu-l-ʿulūmu-dh-dhāhiriyyah* ‘an *al-ʿism*} lest they not see at all and so remain People of Calumny {*ahlu-s-siʿayah*}.

“The Messenger, upon whom be the blessings of Allāh and peace, pointed to this when, in speaking to Abū Juhayfa, he said, ‘Oh Abū Juhayfa. Ask the scholars {*al-ʿulamāʾ*}, mingle with the sages {*al-ḥukamāʾ*} and sit with the ‘old’ ones {*al-kubarāʾ*}’<sup>76</sup>.

“The man of knowledge {*al-ʿilm*} guides you by proofs {*al-dalīl*} to the science derived from the Names {*al-ʾasmāʾ*}, the end of which is the Garden {*al-jannah*}. The sage, who is from those who are Near {*al-muqrab*} to Allāh, guides you to certainty {*al-yaqīn*} and the Reality of the Attributes {*al-ḥaqāʾiqu-ṣ-ṣifāt*} which is from the root that ends at the Dwellings of Nearness {*al-manāzil-l-qurbah*} which Allāh refers to in His Saying, Exalted is He,

آتَقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ

ʾATTAQŪ-LLAHA WA-B-TAGHŪUŪ ʾILAYHI-L-WASĪLAH

*Be conscious of Allāh and seek the means to communion*  
{5:35}

“The ‘old’ ones are they who lead you on the path by the Secrets of Existence {*al-ʿasrāru-l-wujūd*} to the Way of Purity and Blamelessness {*ṭarīqu-ṣ-ṣafāʾ wa-n-nazāhah*} whose end is to Allāh. All three approaches are unified in the Way of the Old Ones.

“Thus we say that Allāh has beautified some with knowledge {*al-ʿilm*}, others with knowledge of the essential realities {*al-ḥaqāʾiq*}, and yet others with the secrets {*al-ʿasrār*}. The latter are the Agents {*al-khilafāʾ*} of the Prophets, the Substitutes {*al-ʾabdāl*} for the Prophets and the Seers {*al-baṣīrah*}.

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصَرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَنِي

QUL HĀDHĪHI SABILĪ

ʾADʾŪŪ ʾILA-LLĀHI ʿALĀ BAṢIRATIN ʾANA WA MANI-T-TABAʿANĪ

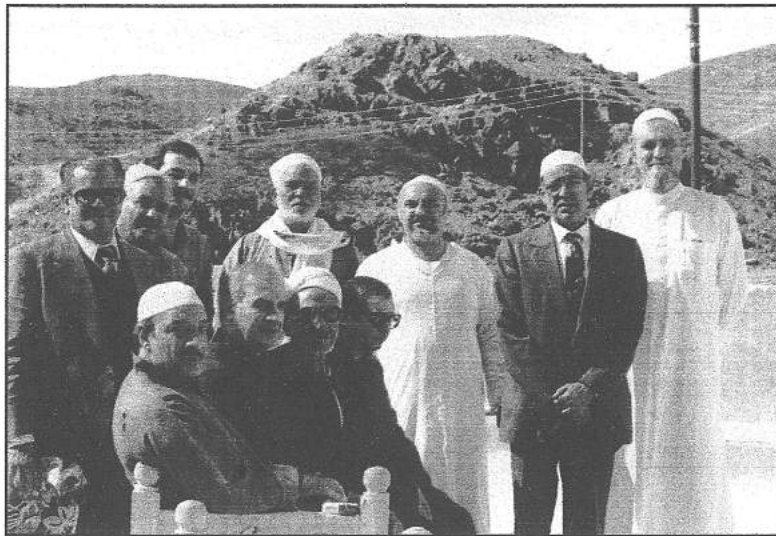
*Say, ‘This is my Way. I call on Allāh through Inner Vision. I and those whose follow me.’*  
{12:108}

Such then are those who call the people to Allāh through inner vision, all the while knowing the reality of every path and, very importantly, the suitable path for the different people seeking the Way to Allāh.

<sup>76</sup> meaning those who have passed though it all.

“They are those who are finished – who have reached the end (*an-nihāhan*).  
Our ʿImām, may Allāh be content with him, used to recite this short poem:

He sang for me from my heart  
So I sang as did he  
We were where they are  
They were where we are

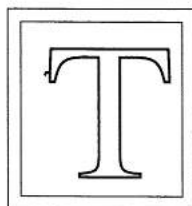


*The travelers to Humaythira 1984*



## THE INTERPRETER

### Abu-l-ʿAbbās and the Ṣūfī Explanation



he Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, made neither a long nor a short interpretation {*tafsīr*} of the Qurʾān. Rather we find certain sayings {*ḥadīth*} of his concerning one Verse or Sign {*ʿāyah*} or another which have in turn been collected in several recensions<sup>77</sup>. It is also said by many that his noble conduct {*sulūk*} was itself a *tafsīr* of the Qurʾān. Indeed one of his wives, Sayyidah ʿAʿishāh, may Allāh be content with her, said, “He was Qurʾān walking.” We may say that his whole blessed life, in all of its detail, was in reality an explanation {*ash-sharḥ*}, an elucidation, an interpretation<sup>78</sup> {*tafsīr*} of the Qurʾān.

Thus there was no direct explanation or intepretation of the Qurʾān made on a verse by verse basis either by the Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, or by any of his illustrious companions, may Allāh be content with them all. The fruit of this is that the Qurʾān has always remained fresh and alive; it is an open spring filled with meaning for illuminated hearts just as it is a vast and bottomless ocean without a shore. One of the the greatest thinkers {*al-mufakirīn*} was asked what the best explanation of Qurʾān was and he replied, “Time.”

There can be no doubt amongst those who are immersed in that vast ocean which is the Qurʾān that every day new horizons of meaning are opened out and unsuspected depths are revealed of even the most well known Signs or Verses {*ʿāyāh*}.

The Ṣūfis, in this respect, and in accord with the Guidance of Allāh, have been the receptacles of the most wonderful inspirations and illuminations {*ʾilḥāmāt wa ʾishrāqāt*}. They call these *ʾishārāt*, which means subtle hints, intimations, fleeting indications, and by this they seek to communicate their understanding that the various Verses or Signs of the Qurʾān — while each Sign has an interpretation and explanation with regard to language, reason and history — also have deeper and more illuminated areas of spiritual understanding and insight. The secrets of the Qurʾān are infinite and cannot be encompassed by boundaries {*lā yaḥṣira hā ḥāṣir*} nor contained by any one person. Each person comprehends the secrets of the Qurʾān according to their knowledge.

There are also spiritual intimations {*al-ʾishārāt*}<sup>79</sup> and Divine favours {*at-tawjīhātu-l-ʾilahiyyah*} to the heart and bestowal of insights {*al-baṣāʾir*} into the meaning and interpretation of the Noble Qurʾān which, though they can never be totally grasped, never fade with time.

When the Ṣūfis use the word — *ʾishārāt* — they mean to convey that no matter how beautiful or meaningful one of these illuminations or intimations may be in itself, it does not nor can it ever convey all the light and fragrance of the *ʾāyah* for, in reality, the inspirations, illuminations and indications are without end as Allāh, praised be His Name, says,

<sup>77</sup> the most well known of which are the Authentic {*ṣaḥīḥ*} Collections by Muslim and Bukḥārī

<sup>78</sup> *tafsīr* = explanation, elucidation, interpretation, commentary may be used almost interchangeably.

<sup>79</sup> *al-ʾishārāt* = sign, motion, nod, wink, wave; gesture; signal; indications; allusion, hint, intimation; {silent} reminder; advice counsel, suggestion; instruction, order, command. From *shwr* = make a sign, signal, wink, point out.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَمَ  
وَالْبَحْرِ يَمْدُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ  
مَا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمَاتُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

WA LŌW ʾANNAMA FĪ-L-ʾARḌI MIN ShĀJARATIN ʾAQLĀM  
WAL- BAHRU YAMUDDUHU MIM BAʿDIHI SABʿATU ʾABĤURIM  
MĀ NAFIDAT KALIMĀTU-LLĀH: ʿINNA-LLĀHA ʿAZĪZUN ḤAKĪM

*Though all the trees in the earth were pens  
and the sea were ink - with seven seas more - to replenish it  
yet the Words of Allāh would not be exhausted — Truly He is the All-Mighty, the Wise  
{31:27}*

From this perspective the Ṣūfīs understand that the inspirations and illuminations that are to be derived from the ʾāyāh contained within the Qurʾān can never be exhausted and, indeed, are endlessly flowing and eternally flowering.

Two points, however, should be kept in mind.

- Firstly, these ʾishārāt never aim at replacing an accepted {*al-maʾlūf*} interpretation.
- Secondly, they do not contradict an accepted interpretation.

They are ʾishārāt, not *tafsīr*! In this way, and from this perspective, there is no conflict between the well known and accepted commentators {*al-mufasssīrūn*} and the Ṣūfīs.

Concerning the explanations of the Ṣūfīs, Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, who was a great faqīh and ʿalim, says,

“By way of advice. Know that when the Ṣūfīs give an explanation {*tafsīr*} of the Words of Allāh or the words of His Prophet, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, it is not for the purpose of removing the obvious from the obvious or replacing the seen with the unseen.”

If that is by way of advice let us, by way of example, give one of the interpretations of the Words of Allāh made by Sidī Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh. In one of the ʾāyāh of the Qurʾān it is written,

يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذَّكَورَ

YAHABU LI-MAʾNY-YASHĀĀʾU ʾINĀThĀNw-  
WA YAHABU LI-MAʾNY-YASHĀĀʾU-Dh-DhUKUR

*He gives females to whom He chooses and He gives males to whom he chooses.  
{42:49}*

“In this portion of the ʾāyāh the use of the phrase — *He gives females to whom He chooses* — means virtues {*al-ḥasanāt*} and the use of the phrase — *He gives males to whom He chooses* — refers to knowledge {*al-ʿulūm*}. Allāh then goes on to say in the very next ʾāyāh,

أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنثَاءً وَ يَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا

ʿŌW YUZAWWIJUHUM DHUKRĀNĀN-WA ʿINĀṬĥĀ :  
WA YAJāʿALU MAŃY-YASHĥĀĀĀʿU ʿAQĪMĀ

*Or He mingles males and females and He makes barren whom He wills*  
{42:50}

“In th’s portion of the ʿāyah the use of the phrase — *He mingles males and females* — means that knowledge and virtues may be given to the same person or — *He makes barren whom He wills* — means that He wills that some people have neither knowledge nor virtue.”

To cite another example: the ShAYKḥ said, concerning this portion of an ʿāyah in which the Prophet Mūsā, peace be upon him, is speaking to his people:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً

ʿINNA-LLĀHA YAʿMURUKUM ʿAN TADḥBAḥŪ BAQARAH

*Surely Allāh has ordered you to sacrifice a cow*  
{2:68}

“ means just what it says and also it may be understood to mean that, “The cow is the appetitive self {an-nafs} of anyone. Thus Allāh has ordered you to slay your nafs — to rid your ‘self’ of its appetites.”

Thus the outer meaning is clearly preserved in which the Prophet Mūsā, peace be upon him, is commanded by Allāh to order his people to sacrifice a cow, and yet at the same time the ShAYKḥ brings out another, and perhaps more internal meaning, which refers to every ‘self’ who reads the ʿāyah, thus enlarging the meaning from something said 3,000 years ago by a Prophet to his people to a meaning which is always alive and present no matter when and by whom the Qurʾān is read. One meaning is specific in time, the other meaning is universal throughout time. Yet neither does the specific cancel the universal nor does the universal cancel the specific.

In this context it is wise to consider a ḥadīth of the Prophet<sup>80</sup>, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him, who said,

“The Qurʾān came down in seven modes {aḥruf}. Each verse {ʿāyah} has an outside {ḍḥāhir} and an inside {bāṭin}. Each of the modes has a circumference {ḥadd} and an azimuth {maṭlaʿ}.”

The ḍḥāhir is the literal meaning; the bāṭin is the concealed meaning. The ḥadd is the moral meaning and the maṭlaʿ is the analogical meaning. The ḍḥāhir is the explanation {ʿibārah} and the bāṭin is its intimation {ʿisharah}. The ḥadd rests in the correct understanding {faḥm} and the maṭlaʿ is the reality {ḥaqāʿiq} behind the understanding. The ḍḥāhir is its reading {tilāwah} and the bāṭin is the resonance {rannān} of that reading. The ḥadd defines the lawful {ḥallāl} and the unlawful {ḥarām} and the maṭlaʿ is the control of the heart {ʿishrāfu-l-qalb} over the permitted and the forbidden.

<sup>80</sup> transmitted by Abū-l-Aḥwas and recorded by ʿAbdullāh Masʿūd.

Sayyidinā ‘Alī, may Allāh honour his presence, said<sup>81</sup> that, “The Messenger of Allāh, blessings and peace be upon him, did not hide anything from people except that which Allāh concealed which He bestows upon a man’s understanding of His Book.”

Some may say that all of this presages a twisting {*jadl*} or a stretching {*arad*} of meaning, but it is neither a twisting nor is it a stretching because the Ṣūfis do not claim their interpretation to be the only interpretation, and agree with both the exoteric {*dhāhir*} and the contextual {*hadd*} meaning of the ṛāyah. Rather what we speak of here is an augmentation of the meaning. Abū Dardā, may Allāh be content with him, said, “One cannot understand the religion {*ad-dīn*} until one sees the Qur’ān from different perspectives.”

Along these lines Shaykh Muḥi-d-dīn, may Allāh be content with him, told the following story, “Some poor men {*fuqarā*} were invited to a meal in one of the alleys of Qāhirah, may Allāh protect it, and some of the shuyūkh gathered to eat with them. When the food was served it was discovered that there was not a large enough platter upon which to put all the food. There was however a large vitreous china vessel available which had been made for the purpose of urination but which had never been used.

“The host put the food in it and served his guests. When the assembled company dug in and began to eat, the vessel was heard to say, ‘Since the hour these blessed men have honoured me by eating from me I shall never allow myself to be used for the purpose for which I was created.’ When it said this it immediately broke and split in half.”

“The Shaykh said to the gathering, ‘Did you hear what the vessel said?’ and many present replied in the affirmative. He then asked a number of those present to recount what they had heard the vessel say and they replied word for word exactly what the vessel said right before it broke in half.

“He said, ‘It said something else.’ and all clamoured to know what this ‘something else’ was. He, may Allāh sanctify his secret, said, ‘Thus are your hearts. Allāh has generously bestowed faith upon them. Therefore do not make them to be a place for the filth of rebellion {*ma‘ṣiyah*} and lust {*shawah*} for this world {*ad-dunyā*}. We ask Allāh to make us to be among those who understand Him and receive His Grants {*minān*} and His Generosity {*karam*}.”

One of the first things Allāh, the Most High, says of Himself in the Qur’ān is,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

’AL-HAMDU LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-‘ĀLAMĪN

*Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds*

{1:2}

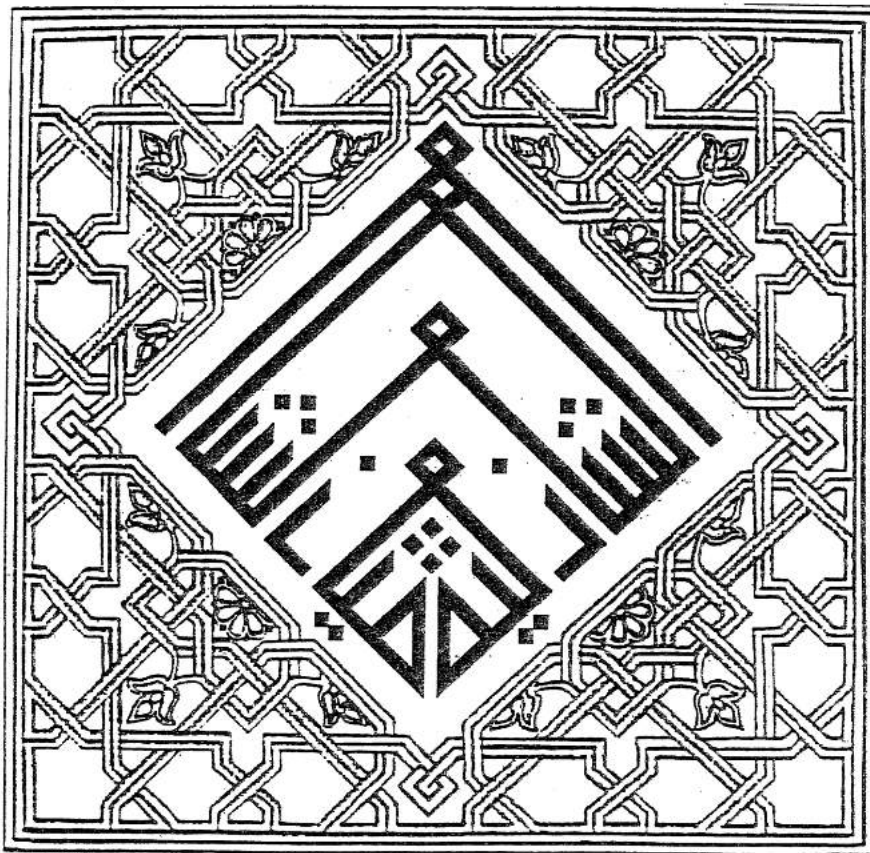
Shaykh Abū-l-‘Abbās said, ‘Allāh knew the inability of His creatures to praise Him, so He praised Himself before time. When He created the creatures He required His creatures to praise Him by His praise of Himself. Thus He said — *Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds* — meaning, ‘Praise Allāh in the way that He praised Himself by a praise which no One else can utter and a praise for which no One else is eligible.”

These few examples only touch on the ṛishārāt of Shaykh Abū-l-‘Abbās, from which we can see the depth of his grace and insight, may Allah.bless him and protect his secret.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> recorded by al-Bukhārī

<sup>82</sup> For further examples of the ṛishārāt of the Sh ādhūliyyah, see *Orisons*, pp 47-49.

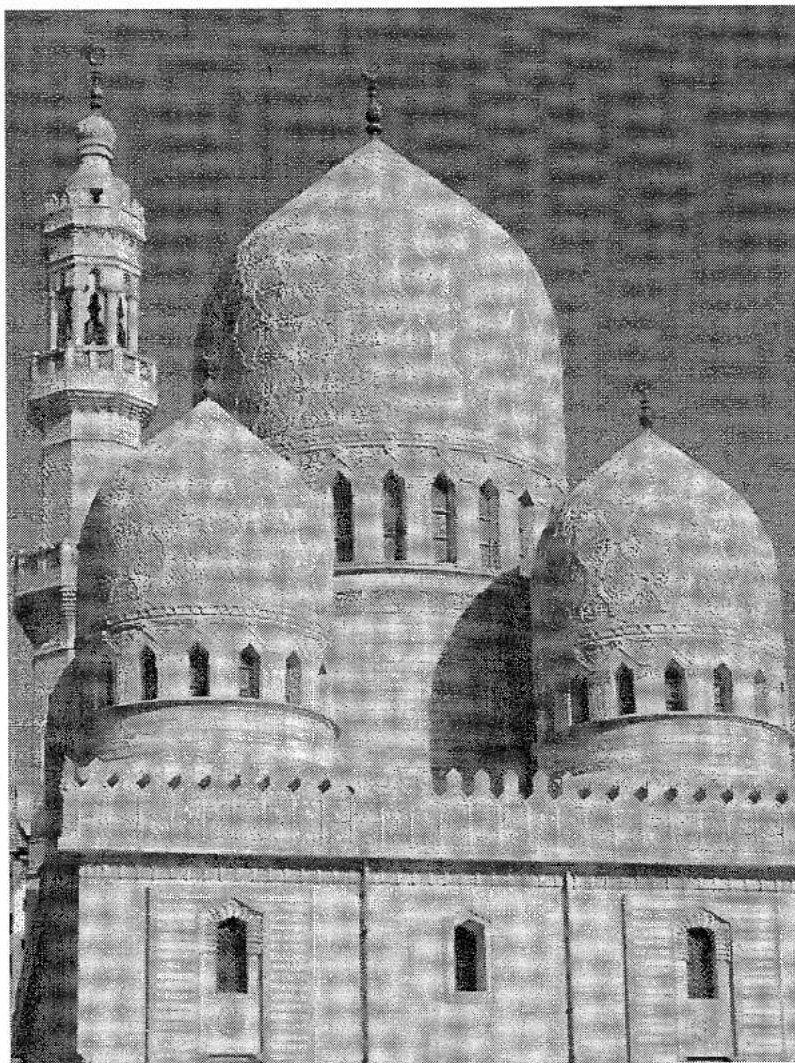
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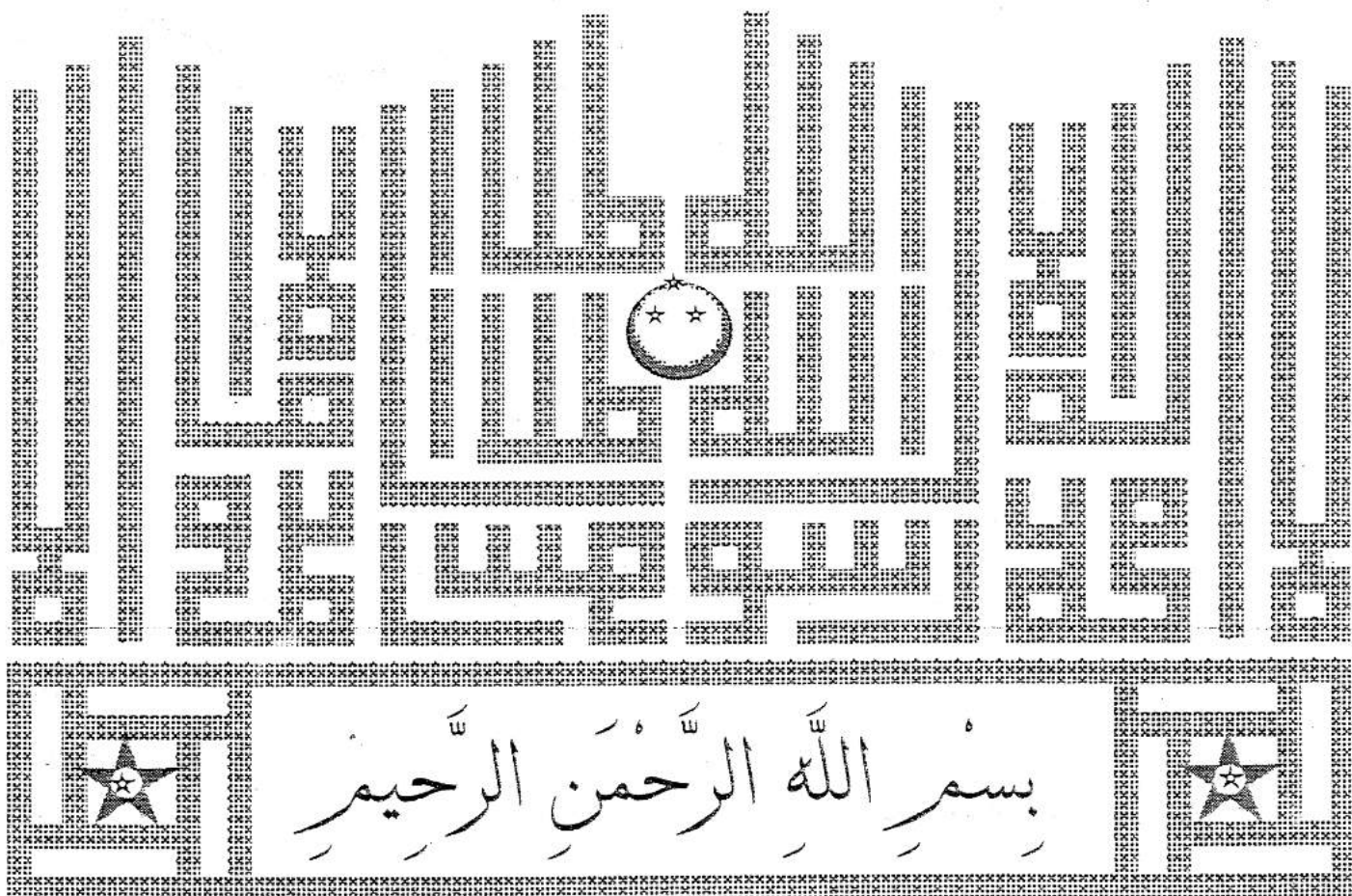
The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah

SIDI YĀKŪT AL ‘ARSHI  
VOLUME TWO, BOOK THREE  
ORIGINS





*Masjid & maqam of Sidi Yakūt al Arshi, Alexandria*



**SIDI YĀQŪT AL-°ARSHI**  
**AND HIS SUCCESSORS**  
 Compiled from a number of sources by Ibrahim Hakim

Sidi Abu'd Durr Yāqūt al-°Arshi al-Ḥabashi, the great knower and wali of Allāh ﷻ, was the successor and inheritor of the Qutb, Sidi Aḥmad Abu'l °Abbās al-Mursi (may Allāh be well-pleased with them both). Sidi Yāqūt was born in the land of Habasha (Ethiopia) on the night of the 27<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān during the summer, and on that same day, Shaykh Abu'l °Abbās cooked a hot porridge and fed it to his fuqarā. They said, "This dish is only prepared in the winter, why did you cook it in the summer?" He replied, "This is the baraka of our son Yāqūt who was born today in Habasha, and he will come to us shortly," and it was as he said.

When Sidi Yāqūt was still a young boy, he was bought as a servant by a trader, who wanted to take him (along with other boys) to sell in Alexandria. On the way up, the sea became violent and he made a vow to Allāh ﷻ that if He saved them and let them enter Alexandria safely, he would gift Sidi Yāqūt to the Shaykh Abu'l °Abbās. When Allāh caused him to enter Alexandria safely, he came to Shaykh Abu'l °Abbās with another boy, due to his attachment to Sidi Yāqūt, but the Shaykh said, "This is not the boy you specified for us." He had no choice but to give him Sidi Yāqūt, and the Shaykh said, "This is the one that Destiny promised to us."

So Sidi Abu'l 'Abbās took Sidi Yāqūt from his young age as a personal servant (*khadīm*) in his house, and because of this, Sidi Yāqūt came to know about all of the states of the Shaykh in intimate detail, and his love and service for the Shaykh grew stronger by the day. In turn, the Shaykh saw in him a truthful scrupulous honest servant, given to worship and righteous deeds and inner dis-attachment from this dunya. When Sidi Yāqūt became a young man, the Shaykh married him to his daughter Bahja. Out of Sidi Yāqūt's awe for his Shaykh, he was at first too shy to approach her. When she complained to her father about his shyness, he advised him not to be shy, and encouraged him to have children. When an important guest would visit Sidi Yāqūt while she was talking to him, he would not leave her to speak with his guest, and would say, "She is my Shaykh's daughter, please excuse me." This marriage to the daughter of his Shaykh was another dimension and secret of his inheritance from him.

Like the companion Sayyidina Bilāl al-Ḥabashī before him, Sidi Yāqūt had a good voice, and came to be the one who called the adhān in the zawiya. He used to hold off from giving adhan until he heard the angels around the celestial Ka'aba (see Q52:4), and only then would he commence with the call. His heart and spirit roamed around the 'Arsh and dwelled in its vastness, while only his body stayed in this dunya, being "in this world but not of this world," and verifying in himself the meaning of transparency (shafafiya) – one of the fundamentals of the Shādhdhūli teaching. His Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbās saw all of this in him and named him 'Yāqūt al-'Arshī' or 'precious jewel of the Throne'.

In relation to this, Hāfiz Abu'l Shaykh ibn Ḥayyan, in his *Kitab al-'Adhama*, records a weakly authenticated narration which states that: "The 'Arsh is fashioned from a red ruby (Yāqūt)"; and Hafiz Tabarani records the following ḥadith from Abu Ayyub: "Those who love each other for the sake of Allāh, will sit on seats of Yāqūt around the 'Arsh." No doubt this love for the sake of Allāh ﷻ was exemplified in the relationship between the Shaykh and his favorite servant Sidi Yāqūt.

When he asked Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan if he could also take from him, Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan said: "I looked and I saw your name among the companions of my companion (Abu'l 'Abbās), and how excellent a second generation!"

Sidi Makin ad-Din al-Asmar, one of the advanced companions of Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan, used to say, "I would see the light of Walaya on Sidi Yāqūt." In time, Sidi Yāqūt was buried next to Sidi Makin ad-Din, in the same masjid.

Once a Sharīf (descendent of the Prophet – blessings and peace of Allāh ﷺ upon him and his family) with old worn out cheap clothes came in to Sidi Yāqūt and saw him wearing expensive clothes, and said to him: "How is it that you are in this state while I am in this state?" Sidi Yāqūt said: "Maybe you followed the ways of my forefathers, so they thought you to be from them, and thus placed you in this condition, while I followed the ways of your forefathers, so they considered me to be from them, and placed me in this condition." On hearing these words, the man wept and apologized, and became one of his murids.

Similarly, another Sharīf came and saw the people kissing his hands and feet, while this Sharīf was ignored, and he took offence to this in his heart. Then Sidi Yāqūt saw this in him and said: "If my feet were cut and sold in the market, they would not be worth two dirhams. However, when I followed the path of your pure forefathers I gained honor (sharaf), and when you went against your forefathers and their character, and became dressed with lowly moral traits, you were treated thus," and this Sharīf could not offer any response.



Sidi Yāqūt al-Arshī also used to say: “Whoever claims that he takes knowledge and Adab directly from the Messenger ﷺ, then ask him to describe the manner in which that happens. If he says, ‘I see a light which fills the horizon from East to West, and I hear a voice from that light speak to me – sensing it outwardly and inwardly – without coming from a specific direction...’, then believe him. Otherwise, he is a lying claimant.”

When the Sultan Ḥasan of Cairo heard of him, he went to Alexandria to visit him, and when he saw him he thought, “A black servant given all this (glory)!” And when he approached him, Sidi Yāqūt gave him seven light strikes on the head, saying: “O Ḥasan, *he is indeed a servant We have honored and blessed* (Q43:59),” Sultan Ḥasan lived after that for seven months.

Sidi Yāqūt used to say: “The faqir must respect the people in accordance with their level of piety, not in accordance with their dress.” And he also said: “I am the most knowledgeable in my time about *La ilaha illa-Allah*.” He also said in reply to a questioner: “If you sit with the great men, they will protect and maintain you, but if you accompany the little boys, you will be destroyed with them and they will not be able to save you.” From this, one of the Shuyukḥ of Imam Sha‘rānī said: “If the one who sits with the Awliya is protected from disaster, then what if you sit with the Lord of the heavens and the earth?”

Sidi Yaqut used to say: “To gaze for one hour upon the face of the Wali out of magnification for him is better for the murid than worshipping Allāh by himself for 50 years, even if there is a risk of danger to the soul in the small one mixing with the big one. However, safety in that mixing is the dominant state, by Allāh’s grace.”

Sidi Yāqūt thought extremely highly of his Shaykh and with much reverence. In connection to this, he once related that he was on the shore outside Alexandria, when a Ṣuficame with money to purchase some fish, but Sidi Yāqūt did not find any for him. He searched and found a captain of a fishing crew, who was Christian, and asked him about fishing, to which he said, “In this wind not one fish can be caught.” He said in reply, “Enter the sea with the blessing of Allāh, for the Shaykh enjoys favor with Him,” and the Christian said, “Allāh does not depart from the customary laws of nature.” But Sidi Yāqūt urged him, saying, “Go with the blessing of the Shaykh, and I will pay you a fair recompense if you catch nothing.” So he gave the captain the money of that Sufi, and when he entered the sea and drew his net, it had an abundance of fish never seen before. When the captain and his crew saw this, he said, “I will enter again with the blessing of this monk,” but he came back with only small fish that are inedible and useless. Among the fish of the first catch was a very big fish, and a Jew came up to take it and buy it. Sidi Yāqūt prevented him, and sent all the fish to the Shaykh, and the Shaykh said, “Pick out that big fish and take it to Yāqūt to give it to the Jew, for he has a pregnant wife who is hungry for fish, and he had his eye upon that one.” So Sidi Yāqūt returned it to the Jew and told him what his Shaykh said, and he – along with the captain and a number of Jews and Christians – became Muslim that day.

Sidi Yāqūt al-Arshī related the following: “I was giving myself to worship in a masjid outside Alexandria without interruption for some days. I became very hungry and entered the city to go to the Shaykh (Abu’l ‘Abbās), and on the way I found a dirham. I wanted to use it to purchase bread. In the market, I saw delicious raisins and, knowing that the Shaykh likes them because he was from Andalus where they grow, I bought some for him, giving preference to him over myself. Then I went to him, and placed the raisins before him, and sat down for a while. When I was ready to leave, the Shaykh told me to sit down, and at that moment a person brought in a table on which were a roasted sheep and baked bread. The Shaykh said, ‘This is a gift from Allāh ﷻ to you because you showed preference to me over yourself even though you were very hungry. So eat and enjoy.’ After I had my fill, he told the other fuqarā to continue eating it. Then the Shaykh said, ‘Take away the raisins and offer them as sadaqa, for what is found and picked up is not permitted to us.’”

Imam Muslim and others recorded that the Prophet ﷺ said: “If you are given something without your asking, then partake of it and give some of it in sadaqa.”

The Imam of the Tariqa, Sidi Abu'l Ḥasan al-Shādhīdhūli, relates that one time he and his companions were very hungry, and it happened that some of the wealthy in Alexandria sent him some food. However, he told his students to not eat from it, and they all slept hungry. The next day, he told them: “Bring out that food and eat from it, for I heard someone say to me, ‘The most halal provision is that which does not occur to you previously, and that which you ask no one for, whether man or woman’”.

Scrupulousness (*wara'*) is a cornerstone of the teaching of this Path, and we can see the same with the successors and inheritors of Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan.

Sidi Yāqūt relates: “One day someone invited me for dinner and served me my plate, but I saw on the food a thick layer of darkness, and said to myself that this food is haram, and so I did not eat from it. The next day, when I went to visit my Shaykh, he said: ‘It is from the ignorance of the murids that if someone serves them food and they see darkness upon it, they say that it is haram. O poor slave! What is your scrupulousness worth if you carry a bad opinion of your fellow Muslims? You should instead say that this is some food that Allāh ﷻ has not willed for me to eat.’”

One time he passed by a group of poor people who were begging, so his heart softened for them and he went to help them. Then he heard a voice inspire him: “Allāhu is more merciful to them than you are, and had He willed He would have satiated them, so seek forgiveness and repent to Him,” and he repented.

A similar situation happened with his Shaykh Abu'l ʿAbbās (when he was still under training), who passed by a group of people crowding around the bread-maker's oven in a time of inflated prices. So his heart softened for them, and he said to himself, “If only I had some dirhams with which I could show mercy to them and feed them.” At that moment, he felt a heaviness in his pocket, and he put his hand in and found some coins, which he then gave to the bread-maker to pay for some bread for the people. When he left, the bread-maker looked again at the coins and saw they were counterfeit, so he caught up with the Shaykh and grabbed him. At that point, the Shaykh knew that the softness in his heart came from hidden objection, so he sought forgiveness and repented, and the coins were then found to be genuine. Then al-Mursi went to the great Mujtahid Shaykh Ibn Daqīq al-ʿId and told him of what had occurred, and he said in amazement: “O teacher, if you show pity to someone you end up becoming a heretic (*zindīq*), and if we do not show pity to people, we become heretics!” That is because he saw the mercy coming from himself, as if the Divine Decree forgot about these people.

The Ṣufi beholds the secrets of the people, and nothing occurs in existence except by the Divine Wisdom, so how can he imagine that *he* is adding his own mercy and compassion? Allāh ﷻ says: “*Do not let compassion overtake you when implementing the punishment*” (Q24:2), and so whoever beholds the sin should not soften his heart and prevent the punishment. Whereas the faqih does not witness these things, and so his heart softens with compassion out of general religious piety.

The same thing happened to the Imam Abu'l Ḥasan al-Shādhīdhūli, when he was in Tunis, and it was Sayyidina al-Khaḍīr ؑ who offered him the lesson and advice, saying: “O ‘Alī, you said, ‘had I the means to feed these hungry people, I would surely do it’; you would presume to be more generous than Allāh ﷻ toward His creation. Had He willed it, He would have surely fed them, for He is more aware of their welfare and well-being than you.”



In other words, the point is not to ignore the plight of the poor, but rather that you see the provision that you give to the poor as coming from Allāh ﷻ and returning to Him, and that if you are an accomplished Sufi, that you not go against the Divine Decree that is witnessed in people.

This is all a type of scrupulousness with the Divine Decree.

Another quality that Sidi Yāqūt al-‘Arshi was known for was his intercessions, which indicate an exalted station among the stations of chivalry (*futuwwa*), given only to those who are realized in mercy and compassion, for the chivalrous prefers others over himself, and is busy in serving the needs of others. Allāh ﷻ said that none will have the permission to intercede except “*those who witness the Truth (Haqq) and possess knowledge.*” (see Q43:86)

When Shamsuddīn ibn al-Libān ridiculed the great Qutb Sidi Aḥmad al-Badawi and denied his distinctions and walaya, he became stripped of his knowledge and spiritual state. Out of remorse he tried to go to any wali he could find to intercede for him with Sidi Aḥmad al-Badawi (in his grave), but Sidi Aḥmad did not accept any of their intercessions. Then someone mentioned to him Sidi Yāqūt, and when Sidi Yāqūt went from Alexandria to Ṭanta to intercede for him with Aḥmad al-Badawi, Shaykh Aḥmad accepted his intercession, and returned his knowledge and spiritual state to him. Then Shamsuddīn became one of the murids of Sidi Yāqūt, and also married one of his daughters. When Shamsuddīn was at the end of his life, he asked to be buried at the feet of his wife, out of reverence for her father, the Shaykh Yāqūt al-‘Arshi.

Sidi Yāqūt also interceded for a man who came to Shaykh Abu’l ‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Mursi and showed bad adab to him, and thought he had more knowledge than him. So he was stripped of his knowledge and the Qur’ān he had memorized, and when Sidi Yāqūt interceded for him after he repented, Shaykh Abu’l ‘Abbās returned to him his spiritual state and the Qur’ānic chapters Fātiḥa, Ikhḷās, Falaq, and an-Nās, so he could pray with them. For this reason, one of Sidi Yāqūt’s nicknames was *Wazīr al-Aḥmadayn* (right-hand man of the two Aḥmads), meaning Sidi Aḥmad al-Badawi and Sidi Aḥmad Abu’l ‘Abbās al-Mursi.

Sidi Yāqūt was one of those who inherited from the Prophet Sayyidinā Sulaymān ؑ, and thus was able to communicate with animals. Once a dove flew into his circle in Alexandria and stood on his shoulder, communicating to him that the mu’adhin of the masjid of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As was taking her chicks and slaughtering and eating them, and that she came to him so he could warn him to stop. So the Shaykh said, “I will send one of my students then,” and the dove said, “no, only you will do.” So he asked a student of his to prepare his donkey, and they both went to Cairo, with the bird in front leading the way until they reached the masjid and came to the mu’adhin. He said to him, “Is it true that you take the chicks of this dove after they hatch, and slaughter them and eat them? You must stop this now, or you will not see good from me.” The man said, “What you came to know from the dove is all true, and I ask Allāh ﷻ to forgive me, and I will not do that again.” Then the dove placed its beak on the hand of Sidi Yāqūt, as if to kiss it in gratitude, and the Shaykh cried from this show of mercy, and those around him cried also. They brought some food to eat, and then the Shaykh recited Fātiḥa and Qur’ān for ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, and left to return to Alexandria.

Among his students and those who took from him were: Sidi Aḥmad Ibn ‘Aṭa’Illāh al-Iskandāri, who continued with him after their Shaykh Abu’l ‘Abbās passed away; Aḥmad al-Harīri, Shamsuddīn ibn al-Libān, Ḥasan ibn Abdullāh al-Ḥabbār (these last two each married a daughter of Sidi Yāqūt), his son Abu ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad Sharaf ad-Dīn, and his successor after him, Sidi Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn al-Maylaq. When Sidi Ibn ‘Aṭa’Illāh

showed him his book *Kitab at-Tanwir fi Isqat at-Tadbir*, after reading it Sidi Yāqūt told him: “All of what you have said can be gathered in the meaning of these two lines of poetry:

There is only what He wills, so leave your cares and abandon them  
 Leave your preoccupations which distract you, and you will find rest.

Sidi Yāqūt, like his two Shaykhs before him, never wrote any books or composed any adhkar or ahzāb, but preferred to take a position of transparency and pass along what he found with his teachers. Also, just like them, he would never accept a student unless that student had sufficient knowledge in the Shari‘a, and also had a means of livelihood thru which he could contribute positively to the community.

Sidi Yāqūt passed away in his eighties on the 18<sup>th</sup> night of Jumāda II in the year 732 H, the same year in which Sidi Abdul-‘Āal (the khalīfa of Shaykh Aḥmad Badawī) passed away. His funeral was well attended. Sidi Abu’l ‘Abbās al-Mursi did not leave behind in Alexandria anyone equal to him.

Shaykh ‘Ali al-Badawī al-Shādhdhuli, the student of Sidi Yāqūt al-Arshī, said: “Shaykh Yāqūt used to frequently send me on a task from Alexandria to Andalusia, so I would go and return within the same day by virtue of the speed of my steps without the Earth folding up beneath me.” Sidi ‘Ali Khawas said: “The murid travels with his body and the ‘Arif travels with his soul.”

Shaykh ‘Ali al-Badawī also said: “Do not visit Sidi Abu’l Abbās al-Mursi except Saturday before sunrise, for that is when he is present in his grave... and do not visit Sidi Yāqūt al-Arshī except Tuesday after Dhuhur.” Imam Sha‘rani commented: “This is something only known to someone who has genuine kashf by Allāh ﷻ. For other than them, he should visit anytime with a sound intention, and his reward will be with Allāh if he does not find him in his grave.”

## SUCCESSORS TO SIDI YĀQŪT

### SHĀMSUDDĪN IBN AL-LIBĀN:

He was named Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Shamsuddīn ibn al-Libān. As a student under Shaykh Yāqūt, he reached a high status in fiqh, uṣūl, grammar, and especially Tasawwuf, and he used to teach the people and hold gatherings of dhikr and admonishment. He died during a plague in the year 749 H.

He wrote a book about some of the allegorical Qur'ānic verses and aḥādith, which caused him much trouble with the people. One of his controversial statements was:

“O Allāh! Your Immensity is too sublime for a sinner to rebel against You or a human to forget You; however, You inspired Your commands (*i.e. Divine decrees, and not Shari'a commands*) in the secrets of the creations (*because the creations are generally veiled from the Divine decrees attached to them*), so that the forgetful one remembers You by his forgetfulness (*even if he is judged forgetful by the Shari'a*), and the sinner obeys You (*i.e. obeys Your Decree and pre-eternal Knowledge*) by his disobedience, and each and every thing glorifies You by Your praise (of Yourself). If he has disobeyed in the eyes of Imān, he has obeyed in the eyes of Your Authority (*Sultan*), yet Your argument and proof is established against them, and “*to Allāh belongs the conclusive argument*” (Q6:149), for “*He is not questioned about His acts, but they are questioned*” (Q21:23).”

About the ḥadith which mentions that one of you might perform the works of the people of Paradise, and when his end draws near the Decree completes its fulfillment and he dies among the works of the people of Hell..., he commented: “This indicates that the possibility of a bad end is exclusive to the people of the works of Paradise, whereas for those elect ones who possess sincerity (*ikhlas*) and perform the works of tawḥīd, there is no risk of coming to a bad end. Based on this division, he (alayhi salāt wa salam) continued saying: ‘He performs the works of the people of Paradise, until there remains only a handspan between him and it...’ Understand from this that those who draw near are of two types: the one who draws near to Paradise by performing those actions suitable to it (and risks a bad ending), and the one who draws near to Allāh ﷻ Himself by remembrance (*dhikr*) of Him; this second one is alluded to in the ḥadith: ‘I deal with My servant in accordance with his opinion of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me’, and ‘if he draws near to Me an arm’s length I draw near to him a body’s length’. This will make clear to you that for the one who draws near to Allāh ﷻ Himself, there cannot remain between them any arm-span. And if that remaining arm-span is the responsibility of the servant to traverse upon in his approach to Allāh ﷻ, then there will be left no space in which Allāh ﷻ in return draws near to him – and that would mean that He ﷻ could not fulfill His final approach. Whatever He promises must necessarily come to pass, and thus the servant’s last step in his approach to his Goal is undertaken by Allāh ﷻ Himself, after which there remains no possibility of distance or entering of the Fire. This special distinction only applies to those who draw near to Allah Himself, and not those who draw near and work towards the Garden as their goal... so understand this, for it is a unique understanding!”

If this is the student (Shamsuddīn), then how vast was the teacher (Sidi Yāqūt)?

## SIDI SHIHAB AD-DĪN AHMAD IBN AL-MAYLAO:

This was Shihab ad-Din Abu'l ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn 'Abdul-Wahid ibn al-Maylaq al-Uṣūlī al-Lakḥmī al-Iskandārī (d749 H). His family name “maylaq” means “touchstone for gold” (to test whether it is fake or genuine). He was the student and successor of Shaykh Yāqūt al-ʿArṣhī, and he also took from Sidi Aḥmad ibn 'Aṭa'illāh; therefore both branches and streams from Shaykh Abu'l ʿAbbās al-Mursī were recombined in him. Aside from being an accomplished Ṣūfī, he was also a scholar of uṣūl, 'aqida, and Shāfi'i fiqh. His knowledge and learning in 'aqida (theology) later became his taste and realization, and this is the most outstanding feature of his supplications and aḥzāb.

Shaykh al-Islam Jalāluddīn as-Suyūṭī, in his *Hāwī lil-Fatāwī* (2:236-37), recorded his commentary on a controversial section of the Hizb of Shaykh Abu'l ʿAbbās al-Mursī, in which al-Mursī said: “My Rab! My disobedience (*maʿṣiya*) of You brought my (attention) to obedience (*tāʿah*), and my obedience to You brought my (attention) to disobedience; so in which of them shall I derive fear (of You?), and in which shall I derive hope (in You?) If (the answer) is in disobedience to You, then You will meet me with Your Grace, and thus remove any cause of fear; and if the answer is in obedience to You, then You will meet me with Your Justice, and thus remove any cause of hope! I wish then that I knew how I could behold my excellence (*iḥsān*) alongside Your Excellence, or how I could be unaware of Your Grace in my disobedience to You!” So Sidi Shihab ad-Din said, in explanation of these words:

“The words of the Ustādh (my disobedience of You directed me to obedience) refer to the reality of the disobedience being known in the Eternal Divine Knowledge, and brought into existence by the Divine Power (*qudra*), and specified in its manifestation by the Divine Will (*irāda*), therefore making its existence at the hands of the slave necessary, in accordance with the Divine Knowledge and Power and Will (concerning that slave), and also because it is impossible for the Divine Knowledge to attach to something, and then that something come to be unknown, or for the Divine Power and Will to attach to something, and then it continue to remain non-existent. Therefore, that pre-determined act must of necessity come to pass in accordance with the Divine Decree (*qadā'*); so how can there be for the slave any way out of it or any means of repelling it? Furthermore, its necessary occurrence at the hands of the slave by the Irresistible One (*Qahhār*) is complete Justice from Him, and not injustice.<sup>1</sup>

“For this reason, it directed him to obedience, meaning entering under the irresistible flow of the decree of Allāh ﷻ, in complete surrender to Him ﷻ, in the same manner as described in His Words:

*Then He said to it (the heaven) and to the earth,  
'Come (into your fullness) willingly or unwillingly!'  
And they both said, 'We come willingly in obedience'  
(Q41:11)*

This ontological obedience is the same obedience referred to in the words of the Shaykh.

“As for his words (my obedience of You directed me to disobedience), it could refer to what we mentioned above, in that he began with the mention of the act of obedience at the hands of the slave, which arose and came into existence by the Divine Knowledge knowing it from pre-eternity, and by the Divine Power and Will providing it with existence, making it impossible not to occur. Yet the slave perceives this act of obedience originating in all



respects from himself, and that (in addition to having the intention for it) he imagines that he brought it forth into existence by his own ability and power and will. He imagined that he had the power to act in disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, but rather simply chose to obey. Due to this illusion of independence, his act of obedience came to be disobedience. In reality, the attribution of obedience to the slave is only symbolic, just as its attribution to the heavens and the earth is symbolic, as understood from the Qur'ānic verse above.

“Based on this reality, one can also understand the words of Allāh ﷻ to His Prophet ﷺ, the master (*sayyid*) of His creatures:

*You have no portion of the Command*  
(Q3:128);

and His saying:

*To Him belongs the Command in its entirety, so worship Him and rely upon Him*  
(Q11:123).

“As for the rest of his words, they mean: If I perceive my disobedience as arising from me, out of adab in accordance with the Shari'a, then fear arises in me, which is then quieted by the inspiration of Grace from You upon me, thus banishing the fear, causing me to see the reality (*haqīqa*) from You. In Your Words: *Had We willed, We would have given every soul its guidance* (Q32:13). And if I perceive my act of obedience to You arising from me, in accordance with the Shari'a attributing it to me, then hope is born in me, which is then erased by the inspiration of Justice from You, causing me to see the reality from You in Your Words: *Your Lord creates what He wills and chooses, they have no choice in the matter! Glory be to Allāh, transcendent above what they associate with Him!* (Q28:68).

“Once this is understood and accepted, then know that Divine Grace has objects to which It attaches, and that Divine Justice has objects to which It attaches, and both (Divine Grace and Justice) indicate His complete lack of need for anything else. Among the manifestations of His Grace upon Its objects is the manner in which He deals with those who disobey Him, by showing them mercy and subtle care and love and generosity and hiding their sins, all these without limits. And among the manifestations of His Justice upon Its objects is the manner in which He deals with those who obey Him, by showing them constriction (*qabḍ*) in their provisions and health, by inspiring other people to reject and ridicule them, and by providing them little in the way of wealth and land and family and companions.”

“Once you witness the above first-hand, then know that His treatment of the disobedient one with manifestations of His Grace could sometimes remove the fear within him, just as His treatment of the obedient one with manifestations of His Justice could sometimes remove the hope within him. That is because whether it is hope or fear that is removed, the state of his end condition (success and safety or damnation and loss) is kept hidden and unknown. In this regard, Allāh ﷻ said: *To Him belongs the Command in its entirety, so worship Him and depend on Him*, meaning, witness all things as coming from Him in reality, while relinquishing any ability or power one might imagine one owns. Give the Shari'a its due right by attributing the good and bad deeds to the slave's acquisition, while escaping and removing one's self from beholding any illusion of the ego's owning any portion of the Command, being outwardly obedient and compliant while inwardly surrendered completely to Him, relying fully upon Him, annihilated before Him in His Presence. This (inward and outward adab) is what is demanded by servanthood (*‘ubūdiyya*) and worship (*‘ibāda*), as I understood from the words of the Shaykh (al-Mursi), and Allāh ﷻ knows best.”



### From his supplications (du‘a’):

“O Allāh, You Who are indeed as You have described Yourself, I ask You by what Your Divine Essence possesses of Qualities and Attributes, O First, O Last, O Apparent, O Hidden, O Encompassing! Take charge of our affairs by Your Being, and do not abandon us to Your creatures, and erase our qualities with Your Qualities, and our attributes with Your Attributes. O Allāh, confirm the existence of our beings by causing us to witness Your Being, and remove every veil which veils us from You, and be our veil from being among the veiled heedless ones, and conceal us from the concealment of the secondary causes (*asbāb*) of You (from the visions), and grant us mercy from Your Presence, for You are indeed most Bountiful!

“O Allāh, no one can know You fully as You are except You, so cause us to know You with a knowledge that makes clear to us the ways in which we cannot know You, so that we can repent to You and return to You from that (ignorance); and cause us to transcend above our deficient declaration of Your transcendence with our tongues and hearts and intellects, such that we become drowned in the encompassing ocean of Your Unique Oneness, for You are able to do all things!

“O my Allāh! The good deeds of those who love You are not guaranteed in their acceptance, while the good deeds of those You love are guaranteed in their acceptance, so by Your Grace O Allāh, take us out of the not guaranteed into the guaranteed. O Allāh, for those who love You, You inspire them to act and then attribute the act to them, and for those You love, You cause to flow from their hands the subtle gifts – in accordance with Your pre-eternal Knowledge – while they are absented from beholding that which vanishes by beholding that which never vanishes; and in all of that You are their hearing and vision as You informed us; therefore, the stains and blemishes of other-than-You do not afflict them. So cause us to be from among them! *Is not Allāh sufficient for His servant?* (Q39:36), Allāh is sufficient for us, He hears those who call upon Him, there is no goal beyond Allāh ﷻ, how excellent a One to trust in!

“O Allāh! Open for us the treasures of Your Wisdom with the keys of Your Mercy, and drown us in the oceans of Your Oneness, and free us from the bondage of leaning in reliance to those whom You bless, and establish Your Shari‘a in us upon the foot of realization, and cause us to walk the ways of felicity, accompanied with tender mercy and success from You!

“O Allāh! O Light! O Real One! O Evident One!

“O Allāh! O Light! O Real One! O Evident One!

“O Allāh! O Light! O Real One! O Evident One!

“Direct us to You by You, and guide us to You by You, and make us among those who direct others to You and who call to You by Your grace, in the way of the elect, with spiritual vision (*baṣīra*) and pure interior and an outward free of lower human nature and that which is disliked in the Shari‘a. O Allāh! Ameliorate in us what is hidden and what is apparent, and beautify in us our inward and outward, and fill our hearts with You and our bodies with all types of acts of obedience to You, and rescue us from the mud-pits of being severed from You, and save us from associating others with You, and make us among those who have reverential awe and heightened awareness (*taqwā*) of You!

“O Allāh, bring about in us the knowledge of Your Essence and Qualities, and the light of Your Names...and conceal us in You from perceiving what comes from us to You, and do not cut us off from You by what comes to us from You, making us blind from witnessing Your firstness and lastness and outwardness and hiddenness, which controls and maintains all things. O Allāh! Remove us by Your Oneness from the mud-pits of the deficient declarations of those who declare Your Oneness, and lift us up from the hidden holes of the possessors of certainty, and cause us to walk the path of those brought near (to You), and elevate us to the peak of the mountain of Sinin (see Q95:2), and seat us in the presence of the utterly truthful ones, and drop us in the river of the elect, all with well-being and safety from what You tested them with. For we are weak and ignorant, and the one whom You carry with Your Grace is not like the one You carry with Your Justice!

“O Allāh! You who knew all things before their existence. You know the inability of the heedless, and the patience of the fearful, and the hope of the possessors of certitude, and the modesty of the gnostics, and the pleasure of the lovers, and the submission of the close ones, and the annihilation of those who arrived, and the subsistence of the realized ones; therefore, what was pre-determined about each of them came to them from You, as Your Perfection decreed in accordance with Your Grace and Justice. The felicitous one is he whom You have shown the secret of wisdom in the allotment of the Decree; make us see that (secret), and do not veil us from it. O Allāh, move our tongues with Your praise, and our hearts with Your glorification, and come between us and anything which bars us from You, by Your power and might, for You are able to do all things!

“O Allāh! Elevate us to Your Presence, and establish us in our witnessing of You, and approach us in every state that we may be moved to approach You, for there is no arrival to You if not by You, and no severing from You if not from Your choice. So save us by Your Grace in connecting us to You, and save us from Your Justice by Your Grace, and make me truly Your servant, and allow me to dwell in Your Court, and grant me Your Promise, and cause my seeking of You to be pure servitude, and my asking You to be pure worship, with complete safety from ulterior motives or distractions with selfish desires. Make me wish what You desire, and make me witness the secret of Your desire. O Allāh! In all of what I desire, combine in that the attachment of Your Divine Will to it and Your pleasure with it, for there is no good with one in whom these both are not combined for him!

“O Allāh! We ask from You secured faith (*īmān*) in You, and in Your Attributes and Qualities and Books and Messengers, and in all of what they brought from You...O Allāh! Make that faith perpetual in me, with a complete witnessing (*shuhūd*) and primal light and superior intellect and repentant soul and spirit in constant return to You, and a secret gathered upon You...gather us in Your good pleasure, and elect us with Your love, so that we may be for You utterly sincere!

“O Compeller (*Jabbār*)! O Irresistible (*Qahhār*)! O Mighty (*‘Azīz*)! Grant me from the lights of these Names – which control and maintain the Left – that which erases the veils which cut me off from You. O Subtle One (*Laṭīf*)! O Kind (*Ra’ūf*)! O Merciful (*Raḥīm*)! Grant me from the lights of these Names – which control and maintain the Right – that which makes me behold the secrets of Your *Jabarūt* and *Raḥamūt*, while being established in my servanthood and worship of You, removed from the valleys of shirk, surrounded by Your providential Grace! Our Lord is Allāh, He is enough for us. Praise be to Allāh, and peace upon those servants He elected! Blessings upon Your gathering secret who points to You, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā, and upon his family, and peace!”

### From his Karamāt:

Sidi Shihab ad-Din used to have a copyist named al-Khaṭīb at-Ṭūkhi. Once while al-Khaṭīb was sitting before the Shaykh, he said to him: “O Khatib! I see that you tire from repeatedly placing your pen in the inkwell,” and he responded, “Ya Sidi, sometimes the ink is difficult and other times it is easy.” So the Shaykh told him, “Give me your pen,” and took out a small knife and proceeded to sharpen and carve his pen, then returned it to him and said, “Take this pen and write a *kura‘āsa* (meaning a copy book) with only one dip in the inkwell.” Al-Khaṭīb was surprised when he heard this and didn’t say anything, thinking that the Shaykh meant only one page, but the Shaykh said, “Why are you surprised? Do as I tell you.” So he took some pages and set the inkwell before him, dipped the pen in it once, and proceeded to write a whole *kura‘āsa*, and the other murids were very impressed at this. One of them said he switched the pen with another pen he had, which he inherited from the companion Mu‘āwiya, who according to tradition was given a pen by Jibrīl ﷺ to transcribe the Muṣḥaf with. When the Shaykh heard this, he asked the murids to bring another pen, which he sharpened and then said to al-Khaṭīb, “With this pen, write two *kurrasas*.” From then on, he became more famous, and he used to run from the people and not sit with them except seldom. This shows his realization of the Words of Allāh ﷻ: “*Had the sea been ink for (writing) the Words of Allāh, the sea would run out before the Words of my Lord would finish*” (Q18:109)...may Allāh ﷻ be well-pleased with him!

<sup>1</sup> Note from the translator: Some of the above might seem to the careless reader to be the same as the ‘Aqida of the Jabriya sect, which believed that the servants had no free will, and thus no responsibility, because they had no choice but were ‘forced’ in their actions. However, what the Shaykh here is saying is very different. First, Allāh ﷻ had full knowledge of every detail of the servant’s (future) acts before he is even brought into existence, and because His Knowledge is true and correct, it would be impossible that the servant’s actions during his borrowed existence be different from what was previously known in Allāh’s Knowledge ﷻ. Secondly, the servant has no independent power to bring his actions into existence from the realm of intention and thought into the realm of reality. There are many aspects within a single act: the thought and intention, the knowledge, the energy, the time and space of its performance, ability to perform it and complete it, and so on...and the only portion of these that the servant can lay claim to is the intention, and thus the Divine Judgment is concerned with and addresses that intention and desire, for “actions are judged according to the intentions.” So when the servant intends some act, and that act corresponds to what is known about him within the Divine Foreknowledge, then the Divine Power and Will come into play and bring that act into existence for the servant, at his hands. If, however, that act does not correspond to what is known about him previously, then the servant will have no ability to bring it about because there will be no Divine Power behind it, and it will remain an intention and thought. Therefore, there is no injustice that can be ascribed to the Divine, because He has not forced the servant to perform an act that he would not have done anyway, nor has He prevented him from performing an act he was going to perform anyway. Furthermore, acts in themselves carry a neutral judgment, and it is the Shari‘a which then labels acts as halal and haram. For example, the act of intercourse is neutral, and is the same act whether done with one’s spouse or with a non-spouse. Then the Shari‘a comes and declares one of these halal, and the other haram, and it is Allāh ﷻ who decrees the rules of the Shari‘a upon His creations (not upon Himself). Therefore, His acts are not held to those rules, for the Shari‘a is below Him, not above Him. So no servant has the right to claim that Allāh ﷻ is held responsible for the evil of the act which He brought into existence at their hand. The judgment of the Shari‘a concerns itself with the intention only, and not the other aspects of the act which the servant cannot control, and then only if it is previously known that the servant will actually perform that act, for a servant can desire and intend to do an act that does not correspond to what is known concerning him. It is rather from the unparalleled generosity of Allāh ﷻ that He even takes the intention into account, and rewards His servants for intending to do a good act that was never destined for them. In all of this, Allāh “is not questioned concerning what He does (for the Shari‘a is below Him, and there is no other God to judge Him), but they (the servants) are questioned concerning what they do” (Q21:23).



## SIDI NĀSIR AD-DĪN IBN AL-MAYLAQ:

He was the maternal grandson of his Shaykh, Sidi Shihab ad-Din: the qādī Sidi Abu'l Ma'ālī Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Dā'im ibn Muḥammad ibn Salāma: Nāṣir ad-Dīn Ibn Bint al-Maylaq al-Shafi'i al-Iskandāri al-Shādhḍhūli (d. 797H), may Allāh be pleased with him and benefit us through him!

He was known for his outstanding eloquence and ability to capture the hearts when he spoke. He was also very handsome and had a great aura and presence about him. He only acquired a basic level of knowledge in Shafi'i fiqh, and devoted himself instead to the Shādhḍhūli Ṭarīqa, his Shaykh being his maternal grandfather Sidi Shihab ad-Dīn Ibn al-Maylaq. He usually was dressed in rough white wool and a simple hat. People used to give him money for his khutbas, and he would distribute that money among his fuqarā and children. Due to his reputation of being unattached to the dunya and his eloquence, he was recommended to the Sultan when he was searching for a replacement for the position of qādī (head judge). At first, he rejected the offer, but then prayed Istikhāra and yielded to the request. So the Sultan dressed him in the clothes of the qādī, and himself took the hat of Sidi Nāṣir ad-Dīn for the blessing.

He was a qādī under Sultan Barqūq for 12 years, and during that period he executed his function as judge with a spirit of virtuous probity, love, unwavering keenness for the truth, and integrity. A group of people became jealous of him, and they went to the Sultan Barqūq (after his return from travel) and told him that Ibn al-Maylaq was loaning out money from the treasury without permission (which was a lie). This fitna caused the Sultan to summon him to his court, along with his enemies, and Sidi Ibn al-Maylaq fainted before him and could not hold or defend himself. Later he said to some of his students: "At that time I remembered the standing before Allāh ﷻ on the Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit anyone." At the same time, the Sultan, seeing this, ridiculed him and mocked him, and removed him from the post, giving it to one of those jealous enemies. The Sultan fined him a large sum of money, and he was forced to sell his garden to pay off the debt, and lived the rest of his life in his house, spending his days with his family and fuqarā. He died in Jumāda II in 797 H. He is buried in Alexandria close to his ancestors, Sidi Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi and Sidi Yāqūt al-'Arshi (may Allāh be pleased with them all!).

### His Council

During his time as head judge, he wrote the following to the other judges under him: "We counsel you with that which Allāh ﷻ has counseled us and those communities before us, to have complete and absolute taqwā inclusive of all forms of the taqwā of hearts and bodies, in all moments, whether hidden alone or in the company of others. Allāh said: *We have counseled those given the Book before you, as well as you, to have taqwā of Allāh* (Q4:131).

"That which enables one to have true genuine taqwā is being in the watchful presence (*muraqaba*) of the Sublime Majesty of Allāh, and the knowledge that He hears and sees everything, and knows the secrets and what is more hidden. Every Muslim believes in this and knows this, but we refer here to a knowledge characterized with unshaking certitude, firmly rooted in one's mind, ever present in one's thoughts, free of any occurrence of forgetfulness or heedlessness or unawareness during the majority of moments. Whoever is such, is overwhelmed with modesty (*haya'*) before Allāh ﷻ and fear of His displeasure. This awareness is magnified further when the standing before Allāh ﷻ on the Day of Rising is present in one's mind and heart, remembering that He will judge us in the most minute detail down to the most insignificant thing...whoever keeps all this perpetually present before his heart's eye necessarily avoids anything which might anger Allāh ﷻ, and undertakes anything that might increase the love of Allāh ﷻ, and strives in everything which pleases Allāh ﷻ.

“Let the people, therefore, remember the Words of Allāh ﷻ:

*You do not busy yourself with any task, or recite any portion of Qur’ān, or undertake any act, except that We completely witness all that you are involved in; and nothing escapes Allāh’s awareness, even the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heavens, or whatever is smaller than that or greater...  
all of that is clearly transcribed in a Book (Q10:61).*

“Let the people beware lest Allāh ﷻ sees them involved in that which He forbade for them.

“With that, one acquires knowledge of the Path, and the unfolding of its benefits with realization of its aims, along with avoidance of ostentation and argumentation, and pride and enmity, and guarding one’s adab along with truthfulness in words and speech, and maintenance of sincerity in every bit of knowledge and action, carrying one to safety from all deficiency and error.

“We also advise complete justice permeating every decision, and curtailing the ego from leaning towards its desires with the strongest reigns and taking the stricter positions of taqwā within the madhhab, and avoiding loopholes derived through cunning pretext for the sake of obtaining a selfish aim or ulterior motive, and having keen and exacting scrutiny in every affair, and verifying the reality in every occurrence, and complete scrupulousness (*wara’*) concerning every clearly forbidden or ambiguous matter, and closing the door of avarice for any evanescent desire, and sticking to a life of chastity and piety, guarding one’s self from evil whether alone or in other’s company, and in general to acquire comely character traits, pure souls, and noble qualities.”

He also wrote a number of books and poems about the Path, most of which are still unpublished, some parts of one of which we reproduce here:

### **Poem of Sidi Nasir ad-Din ibn al-Maylaq al-Shafi’i al-Shādhḍuli**

- 1) Whoever experiences the taste of the Folk’s (*al-Qawm*) drink comes to truly grasp it,  
And whoever grasps it tomorrow would sell his very soul to fully gain it.
- 2) Had he been granted a new soul at each moment, and given them all up to acquire  
This drink, it would not equal its price and value.
- 3) A single drop would suffice the entire creation, making them  
Lost and absent from contingent existence.
- 4) As for the ardent lover, were he to imbibe this drink with every breath, the  
Universe being his cup, it would never quench him.
- 5) He alternates between replenishment and thirst, his drinking never ceasing,  
Becoming sober and intoxicated, his Beloved pouring without end.
- 6) The moment he is quenched he becomes again thirsty, his sobriety followed  
By new intoxication, revealing and concealing his flowing ecstasy.
- 7) The Secret appears to him upon the horizons of his intended objective (the Divine  
Essence), and in reality the manifestation comes from him to him.
- 8) For him, the seen becomes unseen, and the unseen becomes witnessed,  
Complete annihilation brings him to true life (*baqa’*).
- 9) In the midst of his union (*jam’*), he is granted a discerning light, just as the  
State of union in his differentiation becomes a constant experience.
- 10) He continues to draw near, ascend, and aim forward while he vanishes to  
Nothingness, combining opposing states of discernment and infatuation.
- 11) For him, contingent beings have fallen under his will-power, and  
What he wills will come about for him .
- 12) For the Folk, they share a secret with the Beloved which has no limit,  
None but the Beloved Himself truly comprehends it.
- 13) It is through His enablement that they exercise control (*tasarruf*) in the universe,  
So that what He wills they will, and what they will He decrees.



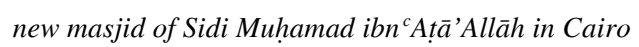
- 14) If you find this incomprehensible, then there is no strangeness in the  
Secrets of Allah in His creation appearing upon them.
- 15) There is not any contingent being in the creation which has influence  
Except He in reality is the Decreeer of that and none else.
- 18) There are uncountable dimensions to the Faqir , and  
All of existence is his valley and terrain.
- 20) This slave is he who is truly free, who has attained the  
Vicegerency (*khilafah*) from Allah His Benefactor.
- 21) His qualities arise from the Qualities of his Originator, his entirety being  
Nothing other than a theater of manifestation of the Divine.
- 22) If he is seen, the Master is brought to remembrance by vision of him,  
So that the one *seeing* him attains to felicity and nearness.

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- 34) Bring your feigned existence to naught, do not ascribe any real influence to it,  
Allow Him to dismember it in each state and build it anew.
- 35) As long as you assert you are something, you will remain veiled –  
By the vision of that something – from what you truly seek after.
- 36) Do not ever imagine any subsistence for you without Him, for  
Whenever you believe yourself without need of Him, you will forget Him!

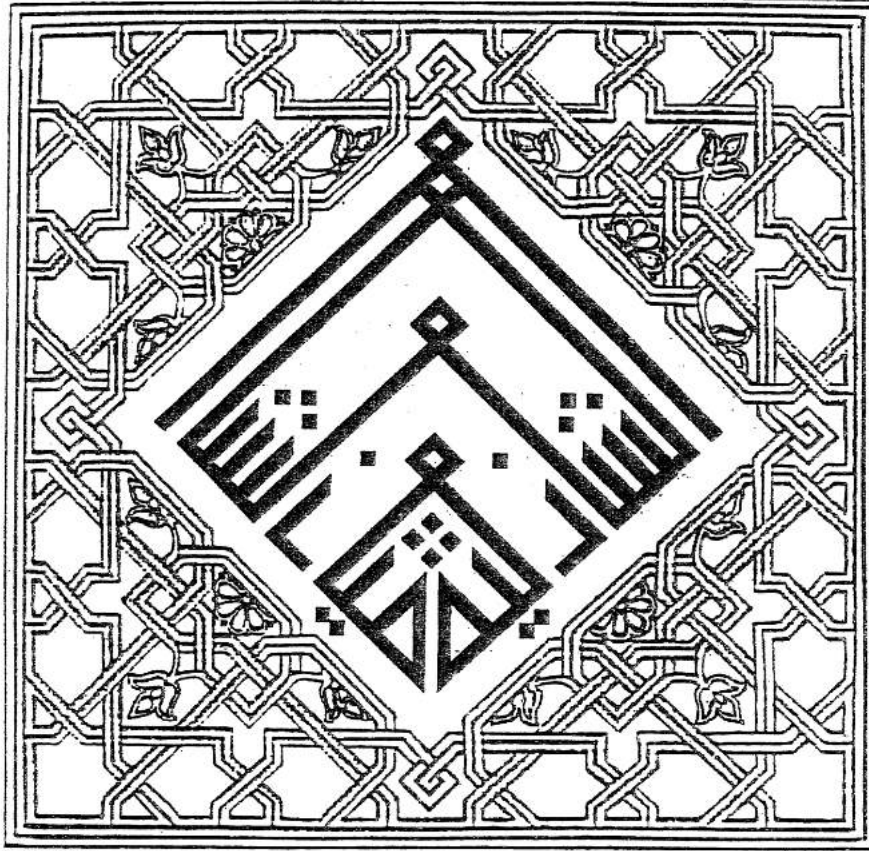
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- 51) You behold the traveler on the Path (*salik*) in a state of inner delight as he  
Struggles against his ego, keenly upholding its (the Path's) manners and rights.
- 52) Walking upon the way of the people of truthfulness in close adherence to  
Their conditions and stipulations, fearful concerning what he hopes for.
- 53) How many a murid has come to death while not reaching his goal  
The Decree having come to pass that he remain distant!
- 54) And how many a murid has fallen low after his lofty resolution,  
His ego's demands casting him down to the lowest pits of the low.
- 55) The murid whose resolution is sound and genuine is none other  
Than the object of Divine desire (*irada*), touched by the Divine attraction (*jadhb*).
- 56) The Divine attraction which occurs after treading (*suluk*) the Path is  
Superior to the attraction that is followed by striving and traveling.
- 57) The subsequent attraction – which is superior to the previous  
Attraction – is that whose lights come to be apparent upon the slave.
- 58) In reality, were it not for the Divine Attraction, the path of Truth  
Would not have been traversed, nor its signposts even seen!
- 59) Were it not for pre-eternal providence and selection occurring  
Before the slave's claims, then his claims would hold no weight.
- 60) The one who desires (*murid*) is the sought after (*murad*), and the lover  
Is the beloved, so receive this truth properly from those who bear it.
- 61) If He is pleased with you as a servant, you will serve Him,  
If He calls you to a firm standing in His Presence, you will approach Him.
- 62) And He will quickly open to door of generosity before you,  
And lift away the veils to unveil to you His caring proximity.
- 63) It is there you will truly know what you were previously ignorant of:  
Spiritual meanings transcendent above limits and boundaries.
- 64) You will be replenished from the pure cup of intimacy,  
How immense the joy of he who passed away full of its pure drink!
- 65) And shower Your benedictions – as long as an ardent lover sings –  
Upon the Prophet, a benediction from You with which You are pleased.



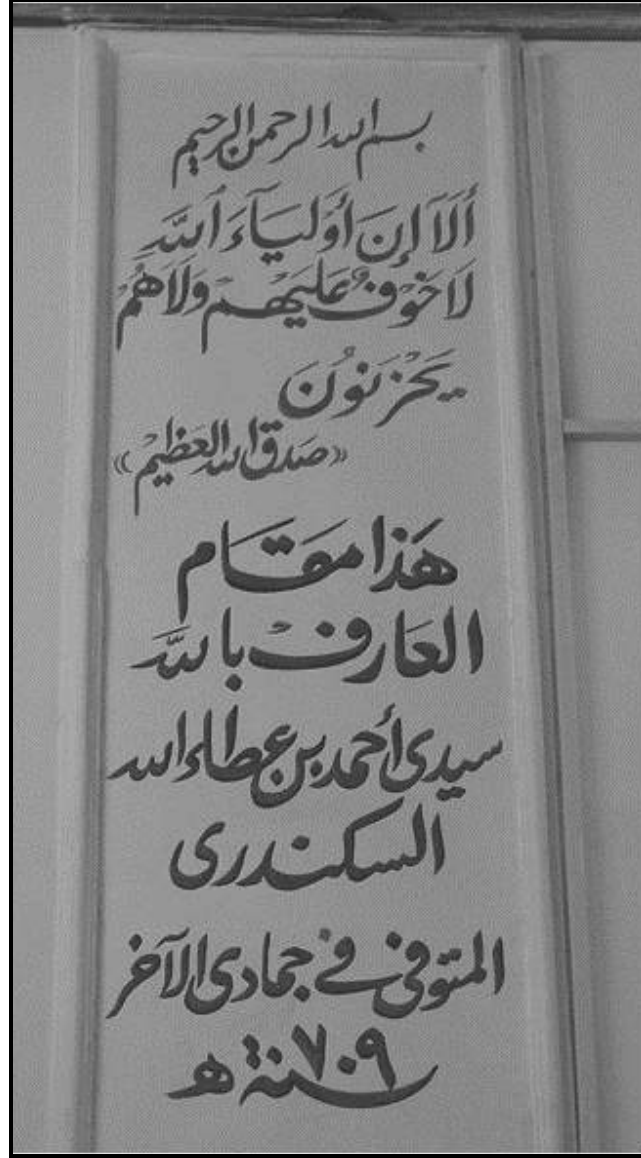
*new masjid of Sidi Muḥamad ibn<sup>c</sup> Aṭā' Allāh in Cairo*

المدرسة الشاذليية



The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah

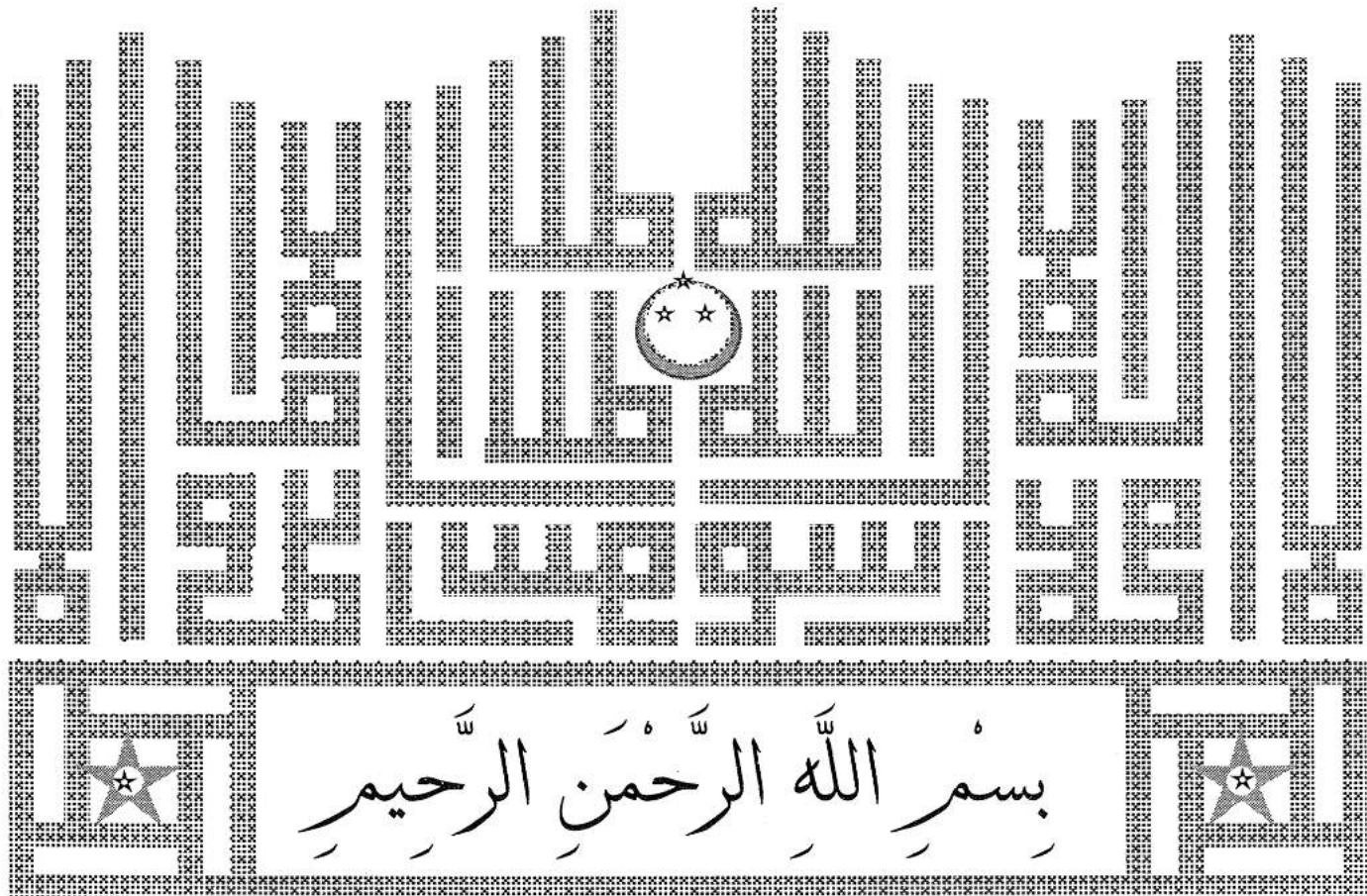
IBN 'ATĀ' LILLĀH AS-SAKANDĀRI  
VOLUME TWO, BOOK FOUR  
ORIGINS



*bismi-llahi-r-raḥmāni-r-raḥīm*

*“The ‘Awlia’ of Allāh have no fear nor do they grieve”*

*“This is the maqām of the Knower by Allah,  
Sīdī Muḥamad Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Illāh as-Sakandarī”*



IBN °AṬA°ILLĀH AS-SAKANDARI  
&  
HIS ṢŪFISM

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What do you think of Who does not vanish....  
Oh slave, as you have surrendered to Me in creating My land and sky  
all by Myself alone,  
surrender your existence to Me.  
You are Mine.  
Do not plan with Me because you are with me.



**DIVISION ONE – Biography of Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh as-Sakandāri**
**CHAPTER ONE: IBN ‘ATĀ’ILLĀH AS-SAKANDĀRI AND HIS TIMES**

1. Introduction
2. His name, ancestors, and family
3. His birth, upbringing in Alexandria, and education
4. His teaching work in Cairo
5. Religious characteristics of his time;  
his role in the Alexandrian Māliki school of Law
6. Political and social aspects of his time
7. His death, tomb, and mosque
8. His status among the scholars and community

**CHAPTER TWO: THE ŠUFĪ LIFE OF IBN ‘ATĀ’ILLĀH**

1. Introduction
2. The beginning of his Šufī life
3. His life as a wayfarer on the Path
4. His life as a complete Šufī:
  - a. His role in the Shādhīyāh Ṭarīqah
  - b. His role in Egyptian Šūfism
  - c. The debate between him and Ibn Taymiyya
  - d. Wonders related of him

**CHAPTER THREE: IBN ‘ATĀ’ILLĀH’S BOOKS AND OTHER WORKS**

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2. Comprehensive Classification of His Books
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**DIVISION TWO – Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh’s Doctrine**
**CHAPTER ONE: THE DROPPING OF SELF-DIRECTION**

1. The basic theme of his doctrine
2. The abnegation of the existence of independent human will and faith in destiny
3. The meaning of self-direction and how to drop it
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**CHAPTER TWO: THE HUMAN SOUL (NAFS)**

1. Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh’s attention to the soul
2. A definition of the soul
3. Its grades
4. Its connection to the body
5. Blaming the soul as a source of moral evil
6. Classification of the motives of behavior

**CHAPTER THREE: STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SOUL (NAFS)**

1. The meaning of struggle against the soul
2. Necessity for the supervision of the Shaykh over his disciple in his struggle against the soul
3. Training of the soul
4. Seclusion and isolation
5. Divine Invocation (*dhikr*)
6. Struggle against the soul and the dropping of self-direction

#### CHAPTER FOUR: THE SOUL AND ETHICS OF BEHAVIOR

1. Ethics of behavior
2. Divestment and having a means of livelihood
3. The moment (*al-Waqt*)
4. Supplication, the gift and the deprivation
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8. Commentary

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  - e) stations of fear and hope
  - f) stations of contentment and reliance on Allāh ﷻ
  - g) station of love
  - h) the stations of the Path in relation to the dropping of self-direction
3. States of the Path (*Aḥwāl*)
  - a) the incoming flow of states
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  - e) degrees of the travelers on the Path in relation to the states
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#### CHAPTER SIX: GNOSIS (MA' RIFAH)

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9. Discussion of some misinterpretations of Ibn 'Atā'illāh's Doctrine

## INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allāh, and *ṣalat* and *salām* be on our master Muḥammad,  
his family and his friends.

The subject of this research is Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh as-Sakandāri and his Ṣūfism, both the theoretical and practical aspects of it. It is a subject which has not previously received the due attention of researchers in spite of its importance. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh is an Egyptian Ṣūfī personality who had an impact on Egyptian Ṣūfism in particular and Islamic Ṣūfism in general. He was a good representative of Egyptian Ṣūfism in the second half of the seventh century Hijra and the early part of the eighth century. Moreover he was the first to fully develop the doctrine of dropping self-management in Islamic Ṣūfism. He was a great literary scholar who had high status in eloquence and in Arabic Ṣūfī literature. Additionally he was one of the leaders of the Shādhīhulī Ṣūfī school.

The importance of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh is not confined only to Egyptian and Islāmīc Ṣūfism. It extends even to Christian mysticism. Asin Palacios, the well known Spanish orientalist, relates in one of his researches that the famous Spanish mystic San Juan de la Cruz was influenced in his doctrines by the Shādhīhulī school as represented in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's *Maxims* and Ibn ʿAbbad ar-Rundi's explanation of them. Palacios relates that he observed that influence due to the strong resemblance between the views of San Juan de la Cruz and the views of the Shādhīhulī school on many Ṣūfī subjects, and also because ar-Rundi, who was born and lived in Spain, was near to the school which De la Cruz represented.

If what Palacios says in this respect is true, it means that the views of our Shaykh as-Sakandāri found their way from Egypt to Spain and had their impact on the doctrines of Christian mysticism.

Moreover, Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's views on Ṣūfism were circulated in a way that was never the case with others. His *Maxims*, which are most conspicuous in revealing his Ṣūfī doctrine, were interpreted by numerous commentators from the eighth century till now and in various countries, e.g., Spain, Morocco, the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey, India, Malaysia, etc. They were also translated into and interpreted in non-Arabic languages, such as Turkish, Malaysian and now English.

When I started this research I had two objectives in front of me. 1) to explore the history of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's life, his status, his contributions to the Ṣūfī movement in Egypt and the relation between his Ṣūfī life and Ṣūfī doctrine; and 2) to reveal (in an objective way) his Ṣūfī doctrine in a comprehensive inter-related picture which indicates its importance and its novelty.

Consequently, this research is comprised of two main divisions. In part one of the first division, I have dealt with the events of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's life in some detail, showing his birth, upbringing in Alexandria in the second half of the seventh century Hijra, and his learning from the best teachers in his time. I then deal with his teaching career in Cairo and his residence and death there, studying the history of his life in the light of his time from religious, political, and social angles.

Part two of the first division deals with Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's Ṣūfī life. I relate how it started, how he progressed in his Ṣūfī path under the supervision of his Shaykh Abul Abbās al-Mursī, how he became a complete Ṣūfī calling to Allāh on the Shādhīhulī Path. I also try in this part to show the characteristics and traits of Egyptian Ṣūfism and the role of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh in it. I also relate the dispute between him and his contemporary Taqīʿddīn Ibn Taymiya, and also explain what biographers of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh have stated of the miraculous wonders related to him, to show in the light of modern psychology his status as a true Ṣūfī.

Division one ends with a chapter on Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's works and their commentaries. It includes a comprehensive survey of his books and the characteristics of each of them showing whether they were Ṣūfī, literary, or psychological in intent.

Division two of this research deals with Ibn 'Atā'illāh's Ṣūfism from both the theoretical and practical angles. This division includes seven parts, which are closely related to each other in two ways. First, they are related in subject matter such that each part is connected with the best of what precedes it and is based on it. This sort of connection shows how the traveler progresses in the Ṣūfī path and the nature of his taste of what he comes in contact with, starting with the dropping of self-direction, then the struggle against his lower self through moral exercises, seclusion, isolation, *dhikr*, abiding by and sticking to the ethics of behavior, and further progress and escalation in the stations and states, culminating in ascertained gnosis of Allāh and beholding the Divine Oneness by direct taste and vision, and not by analogical reasoning or proof. I did not labor to find this inter-relationship because the texts of Ibn 'Atā'illāh naturally lead to it. The second way is the inter-relationship in the doctrine itself. For the Ṣūfī doctrine of Ibn 'Atā'illāh is self inter-related, as we have elaborated upon in this division, and is in its entirety founded upon the dropping of self-direction and planning with Allāh, and full faith in His Decree. No one understands any section of it apart from other sections. Ibn 'Atā'illāh explains it in a special way and with specific logic, which he sticks to from the beginning till the end.

In this second division we have paid attention to the practical Ṣūfism of Ibn 'Atā'illāh in addition to our study of his theoretical Ṣūfism. We have dealt with his practical exercises (e.g., moral exercises, seclusion, isolation, hunger, silence, keeping awake by night, *dhikr* in all its forms). We have done so because we firmly believe that practical exercises are – in fact – the frame in which experiential interactions revealing later Ṣūfī doctrinal temperaments (ideas) take place. We have frequently asked ourselves the following question when dealing with any of Ibn 'Atā'illāh's views: what were the psychological circumstances which enveloped Ibn 'Atā'illāh when he expressed his taste that way?

We have, in our study of Ibn 'Atā'illāh's Ṣūfism (both practical and theoretical), when the occasion called for it, done a comparative study between Ibn 'Atā'illāh's doctrine and the doctrine of some Christian mystics to show similarities and differences between them, between his experiences and theirs, and between his vocabulary and theirs. In addition, we did not forget to study some of Ibn 'Atā'illāh's thought in the light of modern psychology and modern philosophical doctrines.

At the end of our research we have presented some interpretations of Ibn 'Atā'illāh's doctrine in explaining the reality of existence, which imply that it was a pantheistic doctrine similar to Ibn 'Arabi's, or that it was another form of the doctrine of divine incarnation. We have proved otherwise and demonstrated that Ibn 'Atā'illāh's doctrine is based on beholding the Divine Oneness in existence through Ṣūfī taste or eye-witnessing, instead of mental proof and deduction.

Furthermore, we have also taken efforts to support the research by stating the texts which we have utilized to reach to our conclusions, thus explaining the numerous references to them in the text and in the footnotes. This has a two-fold value. First, references endow the research with objectivity that reveals itself in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's own views and as expressed in his own language and own way. Secondly, they help other researchers to go back to the original references if they desire further information.

If research in science bases itself on experiments supported with tangible observation, then research in Ṣūfism, to be practical, should be based on a long progression of texts and quoting them as they are, in order to demonstrate how the conclusions were deduced from them. A text in literary research replaces an experiment in scientific research, or at least it should be considered as such.

We hope we have succeeded in revealing the history of that Egyptian Ṣūfī as-Sakandāri, his Ṣūfī doctrine, both practical and theoretical, its importance and its place in the history of Egyptian Ṣūfism in particular and Islamic Ṣūfism in general.

Allāh ﷻ is the grantor of success and unto Him is everything.

Cairo 1<sup>st</sup> Ramaḍān 1377 H.  
21 March 1958 AD

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*Maqām of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Illāh in the Muqattam Hills, Cairo*

## DIVISION ONE: Ibn 'Atā'illāh's Biography

### CHAPTER ONE: IBN 'ATĀ'ILLĀH AS-SAKANDĀRI AND HIS TIMES

#### 1- Introduction

It is not easy to give a clear and accurate picture of the life of Ibn 'Atā'illāh as-Sakandāri. Previous biographical works did not delve into the details of his life in a way that could reveal its numerous facets and the various phases of its development. Many of the biographies of Ibn 'Atā'illāh are extremely concise, and some of them do not exceed a few lines. It was obvious, however, that we had to look into all of those previous biographies and to combine them in such a way that they would complement each other, and to draw from them information which would enable us to form a picture (of his life).

In compiling those references we looked into all kinds of sources. In order to make our search as complete as possible, we did not confine ourselves to Şufibooks or Şufibiographies, but also searched in the biographies of the scholars of jurisprudence, in history books, and in commentaries on his works. After gathering what we could from these, we went on to compare that information with what Ibn 'Atā'illāh wrote about his own history and life – although admittedly he wrote very little on that topic.

In addition, we studied the biographies of his professors, disciples, and contemporaries, an especially laborious task with regard to the biographies of professors who taught him jurisprudence, grammar, and *ḥadīth*. We were sometimes obliged to read entire books in search of his professors' biographies within the biographies of their contemporaries.

We hope, however, that our effort, even with such scanty resources, has unveiled some of the aspects of the life of this great Sūfi, Ibn 'Atā'illāh as-Sakandāri.

#### 2- His name, ancestors, and family

Biographers of Ibn 'Atā'illāh have stated that his full name was 'Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Karīm ibn 'Atā'illāh.' He is also known as Tājuddīn, Abu'l Faḍl, and Abu'l 'Abbās. Ibn 'Ajība gave his name and ancestors in some detail, saying: "He is the Imām Shaykh Tājuddīn, speaker for the gnostic-knowers, Abu'l Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Karīm ibn Abdur-Raḥmān ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Īsā ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Atā'illāh ..."

His biographers state that he was from Alexandria. They further say he is called al-Iskandarāni, or as-Sakandāri, or al-Iskandāri. Others add that he is descended from the tribe of Juṭḥam, follows the Māliki school of jurisprudence, and follows the Shādhḍhuli way in Tasawwuf.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh was of Arabic origins. His ancestors were the Juṭḥamis, who traveled to Egypt and settled in Alexandria after the Islamic conquest.

With regard to his immediate family, we do not know much. We know only that his father was called "Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Karīm ibn 'Atā'illāh" and that he was a contemporary of Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhuli, founder of the Shādhḍhuli Ṭarīqah, who died in the year 656 A.H. We know this from a statement in *Lata'if al-Minan (Subtleties of the Endowments)*, written by Ibn 'Atā'illāh himself. It says: "My father, may Allāh have mercy on him, said: 'I entered into Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan's place when I heard him saying, 'By Allāh, you may ask about something for which I have no answer, yet I may find the answer written in the ink pot, the carpet, and the wall.'"

It seems that members of his family were engaged in religious teachings. His paternal grandfather, Shaykh Abu Muhammad °Abdul-Karim Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh as-Sakandāri, was a well-known scholar of Fiqh in his time. Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh grew up to be a scholar like his grandfather and was keen to reach his grandfather's position. Biographers of Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh did not mention this grandfather. However, we found his biography in *al-Dibaj* by Ibn Farhoun, which implied that he was an Imām in fiqh, principles of fiqh, and Arabic language, and that he was a companion of the Māliki Faqih Abu Amr ibn al-Ḥajib, who died in 646 A.H. Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh's grandfather and ibn al-Ḥajib were students of Shaykh Abu'l Hasan al-Ibyari, the greatest Māliki scholar in Alexandria at that time, who composed *al-Bayan wat-Taqreeb fi Sharh al-Tahdhib*, a large book containing various kinds of knowledge and strange and unusual statements. He also summarized the *Tahdhib* and the *Mufasssal* of az-Zamakhshari. As-Suyūṭi stated that he died in the year 612 A.H.

Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh mentioned his grandfather in more than one place in *Lata'if al-Minan*, though not by name. He implied that his grandfather had been a leading scholar of jurisprudence (*faqih*). He wrote:

“When I entered into his place (meaning the place of his Shaykh Abu'l °Abbās al-Mursi) he said, ‘When the *faqih* Nasiruddīn recovers, he will put you in the place of your grandfather. He will sit on one side and I will sit on the other. You will, *in sha'Allāh*, speak in both branches of knowledge,’ and what he said became true.”

He also mentioned his Shaykh's words: “By Allāh, I will not be content only to see him in his grandfather's place, if he is not also given a senior place in Tasawwuf.”

It seems that his grandfather did not believe in Ṣufism, and that they (the Sufis) were patiently enduring his mischief. This is clear from one of the statements in *Lata'if al-Minan*, in which Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh wrote:

“Some of al-Mursi's companions said that the Shaykh said one day, ‘When the son of Alexandria's faqih comes (meaning Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh) tell me of his arrival.’ When you came, we told the Shaykh. He said to me ‘Come in,’ so I stood in front of him. He then said ‘Jibrīl came one day with the angel of the mountains to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when Quraysh rejected him. The angel of the mountains greeted Muḥammad ﷺ, and told him: ‘O Muḥammad, if you wish I can squeeze them between these two mountains.’ The Prophet replied, ‘No, for I pray to Allāh that some of their posterity will believe in Allāh's Oneness.’ He endured them, hoping that they would give birth to believers. In the same way we endured the grandfather of this faqih for the sake of this faqih.”

Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh mentioned his grandfather's family in a poem of which we quote the following:

“Aḥmad does not hope for anything  
Except the Prophet's support in time of hardship  
And his father Muḥammad, pardon him  
And grasp him with near and tender kindness.  
Your slave, [Abdul-Karīm] Oh Generous, please grant him  
And give him the best lot and portion  
°Aṭā°Illāh, his father, please endow him  
With a blessing from You, O You who veils misdeeds”

Aḥmad in the first line is a reference to his own name. Muḥammad (in the third line) is his father's name. His grandfather's name Abdul-Karīm (Slave of the Generous) is referred to in the next line. °Aṭā°Illāh, mentioned in the seventh line, is the name of his grandfather's father.

It is clear now that Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh was an Egyptian national of Arab origin born in Alexandria. This is important for two reasons: first, because he thus represents the Egyptian Ṣufism of the seventh century

Hijra, and second, this fact refutes the claims of some orientalist scholars who state that Arabs are not spiritually qualified for Ṣūfism. In their view, Ṣūfism was an Indian or Persian product, or it was a reaction of Islam to other mentalities. These and other similar suppositions lack any proof.

Before Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, there were other founders of Egyptian Ṣūfism, such as Dhu'n Nun al-Misri, Abu Bakr al-Zaqqāq, Abu'l Ḥasan Bannan al-Hammāl. There were others who appeared in Syria, for example Abu Sulayman ad-Darāni and Abu'l Ḥasan al-Hawari. Harith al-Muhāsibi was in Basra (Iraq). Also there was 'Umar ibn al-Farid, the Egyptian Ṣūfi and poet of Syrian origin. There were other famous Sufis of the Maghrib whose origin goes back to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī, the grandson of the Prophet (*salla Allāhu alayhi wa sallam*). Not to mention the whole maghribi-Egyptian line of the Shādhḍhuliyyah. The existence of these Sufis refutes the claims which allege that the phenomenon of Ṣūfism is of a foreign (non-Arab) origin, and that the Arab mentality is incapable of plunging into its realities or tasting its spiritual meanings. The above-mentioned Sufis undoubtedly prove the value and merit of the Arabs in the founding of Islamic Ṣūfism since its inception.

### 3- His birth, upbringing and education in Alexandria

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was from Alexandria, but we do not know exactly when he was born.

We have found some references which help us to determine approximately the year of his birth. All of his biographers agreed that his death was in the year 709 A.H. Only ash-Sha'rani disagreed, stating that his death was in the year 707 A.H. We accept the first date because there is no proof for the second. We also know that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh died in his late manhood, as Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani stated. What could his age have been then? The definition of "late manhood" as it appears in the dictionary, *al-Muheet*, is the age of a man whose hair is becoming grey; a man between the ages of 34 and 51 years. In another dictionary, by Ibn al-Athir al Juzri, the definition is: "between 30 and 40 years, or between 33 and 50 years."

Based on the above and taking into consideration that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's death was in 709 A.H., his birth could have been between 658 and 679 A.H. Determining his birth year in this way is not useful because it is neither accurate nor definite. We therefore compared the above results with other texts, which reveal the following:

- 1- Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was a disciple of Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi and accompanied him for 12 years.
- 2- Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi died in the year 686 A.H.
- 3- Thus, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's training with Abu'l 'Abbās started in the year 674 A.H.
- 4- We also know that before he accompanied al-Mursi, he was himself a faqih, learning exoteric knowledge. There was at that time a dispute between him and the Shaykh's disciples, and he went to visit the Shaykh when he heard him talking about duties decreed by the Shari'a. That meant that he was an adult before 674 A.H. and that he was knowledgeable enough to differ from the students and to understand the speech of the Shaykh.

If we compare what we have earlier deduced from the above, two results implying that his company with his Shaykh started in 674 A.H. and that he was then a young man, with what we have stated before, with the proof that his birth fell between the year 658 and 679 A.H., it is evident that his birth could not have been around the year 689 A.H. That date would place his company with his Shaykh al-Mursi about 5 years before his birth, which is impossible. We therefore think that Ibn Hajar must have meant that he died around the age of 51 or so. It also means that he must have been born in the year 658 A.H. He then would have accompanied Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi when he was 16 years old, a suitable age for someone to begin the study of exoteric knowledge in Alexandria. He was, however, already married, so he may have been a few years older than that.



We consequently assert that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was born in the second half of the seventh century of the Hījra and we can distinguish three phases in his life, two in Alexandria and the third in Cairo.

The first phase in Alexandria falls before the year 674 A.H. He was brought up during that period as a student of the religious sciences of his age, e.g., tafsir, fiqh, uṣūl, nahw, literature, etc. He was tutored by the best professors of that time. The second phase began in the year 674 A.H., when he accompanied Shaykh Abu'l ʿAbbās al-Mursi, and it ended when he left Alexandria for Cairo. During the second period he followed the Shādhīdhuli Ṣufi School, though he did not stop learning and also teaching the religious sciences. The third phase began with his move to Cairo and ended with his death in the year 709 A.H. That was the phase of his maturity as a Ṣufi and a faqih.

In his first phase in Alexandria, Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh forcefully denied and rejected Ṣufism and was completely “pro-fiqh”. He wrote about himself:

“I denied his knowledge (meaning the Shaykh’s knowledge). I refused and contested him... until there was a discussion between me and one of his companions, before I met him. I said to that man, “There is nothing but exoteric knowledge, and those people (the Ṣufis) pretend to immense things which the Shari‘a refuses...”

The second phase begins with the end of his denial when he met his Shaykh al-Mursi. He was greatly fascinated by al-Mursi and took from him the Ṣufi path, as we shall see in detail in the second chapter, which deals with his life as a Ṣufi.

It is worth mentioning that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh did not halt his study of the religious sciences when he became a Ṣufi, but continued learning under the direction of his Shaykh. In the beginning, he feared that his company with the Shaykh might interfere with his pursuit of knowledge. However, he became convinced that keeping company with the Shādhīdhulīyyah did not require divestment of outward activity or leaving the study of exoteric knowledge, or any other worldly affair for that matter. In this connection he says:

“...I had heard students say, ‘He who accompanies the Ṣufi Shaykhs will not gain anything in exoteric knowledge.’ I found it hard to miss such knowledge, and it was also hard for me to leave the company of the Shaykh. So I went to see him (Shaykh al-Mursi) and I saw him eating meat with vinegar. I said to myself, ‘I wish the Shaykh would put a bite in my mouth by his hand,’ and I did not even complete the thought when the Shaykh thrust a piece of meat in my mouth by his own hand. He then said, ‘If a merchant accompanies us we do not say to him, ‘leave your commerce and come. Neither do we say to the artisan, ‘leave your craft and come,’ or to the student of exoteric knowledge, ‘leave your studies and come.’ On the contrary, we confirm every person in what Allāh has stationed him in.”

Thus, we see that Shādhīdhuli Ṣufism does not contradict working for a living. In other words, it does not exclude anyone from the society in which he lives or prevent his acquiring knowledge. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh himself wrote, in the introduction to *Tanwīr fī ʿIsqāṭ al Tadbīr*, “So know that he who wishes to arrive to ʿAllāh should enter from His door by the means He has provided.”

In the time of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, Alexandria was an important center of knowledge in Egypt. Many notable scholars in fiqh, tafsir, ḥadīth, uṣūl, and the other branches of Arabic and Islamic sciences lived there. In addition, Alexandria was full of pious Sufis. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was a student of the most prestigious scholar of fiqh living in Alexandria at that time, namely Nasiruddin ibn ul-Munir al-Garawi al-Juthami al-Iskandari. Ibn Farhoun said of him that he was a distinguished Imām in Fiqh and Arabic language. He was the leading scholar of Alexandria and died there in the year 683 A.H. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh mentioned him:

“When I entered into his place (meaning the place of his Shaykh Abu'l ʿAbbās al-Mursi) he said, “When the *faqih* Nasiruddin recovers he will put you in the place of your grandfather. He will sit on one side and I will sit on the other. You will, *in shaʿAllāh*, speak in both branches of knowledge,” and what he said was realized.”

From this text, it is clear that what Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi foretold of Nasiruddin's appointment of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh for the chair of fiqh had been realized. Thus, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh must have been a student of the faqih Nasiruddin, who appointed him when he saw him deserving of that position. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was also a student of many of the best professors of his time. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani stated in his book *The Hidden Pearls* that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh took knowledge from al-Abarquhi, and studied language (*nahu*) with Muhyi al-Mazuni.

Al-Abarquhi, as Imām Suyuti wrote in his book *Husn al-Muhadarah*, was Shaykh Shihabuddin Abu-l Ma'ali Aḥmad ibn Ishaq ibn Muhammad ibn al-Mu'ayyad, who lived in Egypt, and died in Makkah while on pilgrimage in the eleventh month of the year 701 A.H. He died at the age of 87. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh mentioned his name in *Lata'if al-Minan*, stating that he had attended his discourses in ḥadith.

As for Muhyi al-Mazuni, to whom Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was a disciple in grammar (*nahu*), al-Suyuti mentioned his name within his biography of Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Nahhas al-Halabi, who died in the year 698 A.H. Al-Mazuni and Ibn Nahhas were considered to be of the same caliber, and each of them was called in his time the "Shaykh of Egypt." Ibn Shakir stated in his biography of Ibn Nahhas that al-Mazuni took residence in Alexandria.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh stated in *Lata'if al-Minan* that he studied ḥadith with Shaykh Imām Sharafuddin Abu Muhammad Abdul Mu'min ibn Khalaf al-Dimyati, of whom as-Suyūṭī wrote that he was a knowledgeable Imām. He was born in 613 A.H., studied ḥadith and excelled in it. He also traveled, and assembled a wonderful collection of ḥadith. Shaykh Sharafuddin graduated under the tutelage of al-Mundhiri. He died in 705 A.H.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh may have been a disciple in fiqh, philosophy, and logic of the distinguished professor Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abbad, known as Shamsuddin al-Isbahani, who was, as Subki said, "an Imām in logic, philosophy, *uṣūl*, a peerless leader, devoted, amiable, and he was a vigilant and sincere worshipper." We are apt to believe this because Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh always mentioned his name in his books preceded by "our knowledgeable Imām and Shaykh." That was stated when he related the visit of Shaykh al-Isbahani to Shaykh al-Mursi. He said: "...professors of our time used to ascede to him (Al-Mursi) in this field. Our Shaykh, the knowledgeable Imām Shamsuddin al-Isbahani and the learned Shaykh Shamsuddin al-Ayki used to sit in front of him like other students who went to benefit and learn from him."

Shaykh Shamsuddin al-Isbahani was originally from Isfahan, Persia. He left there when he was young and went to work in Baghdad. He then traveled to Aleppo, Syria where he was appointed as a judge. Then he traveled to Cairo, Egypt where he was appointed as judge of Qus (near Luxor) by Shaykh Tājuddīn ibn bint al-A'azz. Many men learnt from him and it is reported that Shaykh al-Islam Taqiyyuddīn al-Qushayri used to attend his lessons in Qus. He died in Cairo in the year 688 A.H.

It is worth mentioning that Shaykh al-Isbahani also taught philosophy in Egypt at that time. Imām Subki said about him: "...his habit was that when a student went to him to learn philosophy, he would dissuade him and say to him, 'This would not be until you are fully conversant in the Shari'a.'" That shows that philosophy was not fully dead after Imām al-Ghazālī's war against it in the fifth century of Hijra. There were those who were still teaching it in Egypt in the seventh century and those who were learning it, such as Shaykh Bazinbari, who was a student of Shamsuddin Isbahani and excelled in *uṣūl* and logic, as Imām Subki mentioned.

At that time, Shaykh Qutbuddin al-Shirazi also came to Egypt. He was a commentator on philosophy and a student of Nasiruddin al-Tusi, and died in the year 710 A.H.

So we see that Egypt was a landmark for those who studied philosophy and logic in the seventh century, and some Egyptians were keen to study philosophy with the professors who came there. Most probably, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was one of them.

To sum up: Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was born in Alexandria in the second half of the seventh century of Hijra. He was a student of the most distinguished professors of his time in all branches of knowledge. Through his connection with them, he accumulated a linguistic, jurisdictional, and overall academic culture, in addition to his Sufic knowledge, which was gained from his companionship with his Shaykh, Abu'l ʿAbbās al-Mursi.

This is a picture of his life in both the first and second phases in Alexandria. Then came the third phase of his life, which started with his departure from Alexandria to live in Cairo and ended with his death in the year 709 A.H. That was the phase of his maturity in both fiqh and tasawwuf, and his utilization of both in teaching his students.

#### 4- His teaching career in Cairo

After the death of Shaykh Abu'l ʿAbbās al-Mursi in 686 A.H., Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was the heir to his knowledge and the trustee of his *Ṭarīqah*. Even before al-Mursi's death, Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was teaching fiqh in Alexandria, as mentioned above. His biographers stated that he left Alexandria to live and work as a teacher and a preacher in Cairo. We do not know exactly the year in which this occurred; however, we know that when his Shaykh Abu'l ʿAbbās al-Mursi died in 686 A.H., Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was himself in Cairo and had probably moved there a little before that year.

Imām Subki stated in his *Tabaqat*, “Shaykh Tājuddīn lived in Cairo preaching and guiding people.” Al-Munawī stated also in this context: “He was originally from Alexandria, then he lived in Cairo preaching and guiding people.”

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh became a teacher in the greatest Islamic university of that time, al-Azhar mosque. Ibn Hajar stated, quoting Imām Dhahabī: “Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh used to teach in al-Azhar mosque from a chair. His lessons were inspiring. He mixed Ṣufi teachings with the teachings of the predecessors and the various fields of knowledge. The number of his followers increased, and his face always shone with goodness.”

In the book *Ta'atir ul-Anfas*, it is stated that “He was – may Allāh bless him – an ocean of knowledge. He used to speak on the thoughts of the people who listened to him. Many of those who listened to him became his followers. Most of his lessons were given in al-Azhar mosque, where he taught both inward and outward knowledge. No scholar in Egypt objected to him.”

Shaykh Dawud ibn Bakhlā described the lessons of his Shaykh (Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh) and the impact he made on his listeners, saying:

“As for the great and distinguished scholar who revived the teachings of the Sufis, who revealed their words and waved their flags high, he was our Shaykh and Imām, the distinguished scholar Tājuddīn Abu'l Faḍl Aḥmad Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh – may Allāh be pleased with him, and make Paradise his lodging and final resting place, and grant him all his desires and wishes. In this matter, he was the most wondrous of wonders, and every open-hearted illuminated man attested that for him. All of his lessons were wonderful, useful, blessed, efficacious, and luminous. He was very well known among the people. Each of his lessons combined beneficial advice, wisdom, and subtle indications on the Path of the righteous and elect slaves. How many people repented in his presence, and changed their state from bad to good? How many forgetful people woke up, how many ignorant people gained knowledge, how many hard dark hearts became soft and illumined?”

Ibn Taghri al-Barri stated in his book *an-Nujum az-Zahira* that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh “....was a knowledgeable right-acting man, who used to give lessons in a chair, and many people attended his lessons. His preaching moved the hearts, and he was fully versed in the words of the folk of *Haqiqah* and the men of *Ṭarīqah*.”



From the picture given to us by Dawud ibn Bakhlila and Ibn Taghri al-Barri, we can may realize the immense caliber of our Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh as-Sakandāri as a Ṣūfi who guided people to and in the Path of Allāh . We can also see how famous he was in Egypt in his time.

Many fuqaha and Sufis attended the lessons of Ibn 'Atā'illāh, the most famous among them being Imām Taqiyuddin al-Subki (d. 756 H), the father of Imām Tājuddīn Subki (d. 771 H), who authored the famous *Tabaqat*. Taqiyuddin al-Subki was a leading scholar of his period to the extent that Ibn Taymiyya did not respect anyone in his time more than him. Taqiyuddin al-Subki also praised Ibn 'Atā'illāh for his reply to some of his works and thoughts. Tājuddīn Subki stated in his biography of his father that he (his father) accompanied Ibn 'Atā'illāh and was his student. He also mentioned in the biography of Ibn 'Atā'illāh that he was a teacher for his father in Ṣūfism. Ibn Hajar stated: "One of Ibn 'Atā'illāh's students was Taqiyuddin al-Subki. The daughter of al-Subki told me, quoting her father, that: "I heard Ibn 'Atā'illāh saying (and he said some of his words)." Al-Munawī also stated: "Many eminent people learned from him. One of them was the Shaykh of the Shāfi'īya, Taqiyuddin al-Subki – may Allāh be pleased with him."

Hence, we understand that many of those who were considered Imāms in their own right were students of Ibn 'Atā'illāh . That is a proof of his high caliber and that his Ṭarīqah – as Imām Suyuti stated – had no deviation in it whatsoever. In other words, it dealt completely within the Qur'ān and Sunna. Imām Suyuti said:

"Imāms used to attend the lessons of Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh, such as Shaykh Taqiyuddin al-Subki, the Imām of his time in tafsir, ḥadīth, uḥq, philosophy, and uṣūl. No one who came after him was like him and he had no equal for a long time. Imām Subki stated in some of his books that he benefited from Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh and that he quoted him in many of his sayings. He said the Shaykh was the speaker for Shādhḍhuli Ṣūfism. And in one of the glossaries of al-Subki, he stated that he read his book *al-Hikam (the Maxims)* in front of Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh and studied it with him. Had there been any degenerate aspect or deviation in the Shādhḍhuli Ṭarīqah, Imām Subki would never have praised it as he did, and neither would his son, nor the Imāms of his time and their peers."

Among those who followed Ibn 'Atā'illāh was also his student and heir in the Shādhḍhuli Ṭarīqah, Shaykh Dawud ibn Omar ibn Ibrahim al-Shadhḍhuli, better known as Ibn Bakhlila. Imām Suyuti stated in his biography that he was one of the well-grounded Imāms. He learned Māliki fiqh, wrote numerous books and used to speak about the Path. He died in Alexandria in the year 733 A.H.

Imām Sha'arani wrote a full biography of Ibn Bakhlila in which he related many of his sayings and descriptions of his states. He also said his name was Dawud ibn Makhila (with an 'm' not a 'b'). Dawud ibn Bakhila is also known by the Shādhḍhuli *murids* as Dawud al-Bakhili, and it appears as such in the "Chain of Authority" (*silsilat at-Ṭarīqah*). One of his well-known books is *Laṭīfa Mardīya bi Sharh Hizb al-Shādhḍhuliyya*, which contains many of his views about Ṣūfism, especially on such topics as the words of the Awliya, intellectual and spiritual knowledge, and the sciences of the Divine Wisdom.

Also among the students of Ibn 'Atā'illāh who took the Shādhḍhuli path from him was Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Maylaq al-Iskandāri. He was a preacher himself, as Imām Suyuti records, whose words would always move the hearts of his audience. He died in the year 749 A.H. It is also known that Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan 'Alī al-Qarafi received the Path from Ibn 'Atā'illāh.

Thus, it is evident that our Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh was a renowned scholar in his time and that many well-known scholars in fiqh and Ṣūfism were his students. Now that we have examined the three phases of his life, we shall move to draw another picture for him, based on the period of time in which he lived, showing the political and social characteristics and his relationship to them.



### 5- The Religious Characteristics of his Time and his Role in the Alexandrian Māliki School of Law

The life of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh as-Sakandāri fell between the second half of the seventh century of Hijra and the first decade of the eighth century. What were the characteristics of that era in Egypt from the religious point of view?

History tells us that the Shi'a madhāb disappeared from Egypt after Sultan Salahuddin al-Ayyoubi intervened in the year 564 A.H. Sunni doctrines have prevailed since then. Al-Maqrizi says in this respect, "Sultan Salahuddin Yusuf ibn Ayyub began in the twelfth month of the year 564 A.H. to change the state... He established a school for Shāfi'i scholars and another school for Māliki scholars and discharged all Shi'a judges from their posts all over Egypt. He never appointed a judge in Egypt who was not a Shāfi'i. People then showed themselves either to be Shāfi'is or Mālikis. The Shi'a, Isma'ilia, and Imāmiya doctrines disappeared from the entire land of Egypt."

When Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh began his studies during the second half of the seventh century, he found that Māliki madhāb, of which he was a follower, was on an equal footing with any other Sunni madhāb. He also found the doctrine of Abu'l Ḥasan al-Ash'ari to be highly regarded. Al-Maqrizi draws a picture of the religious life in Egypt and other Muslim countries at that time as follows:

"When Sultan al-Zahir Bibars al-Bandaqdari came into power, he appointed in Egypt four judges, a Shāfi'i, a Māliki, a Hanafi and a Hanbali. That system started in the year 665 A.H. and no other doctrines prevailed except those four doctrines and the doctrine of al-Ash'ari. Schools, hostels, and other places of religious learning and gathering were made for them. And those who did not follow these doctrines were considered to be hostile. Scholars all over these areas gave legal verdicts that only these doctrines were to be followed and all others abandoned."

Religious doctrines prevailing at that time had their influence on Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh's religious direction. He was a Māliki and at the same time followed the Ash'ari philosophy.

During Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh's lifetime, there were many renowned Shāfi'i, Māliki, Hanafi, and Hanbali scholars. In Alexandria, there was a well-known Māliki school established by Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan al-Ibyari, who was one of the greatest Māliki scholars of his time and who died in the year 618 A.H. Among al-Ibyari's students were the grandfather of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, who died in 612 A.H., and Shaykh Ibn al-Hajib who died in 646 A.H. The great scholar Nasiruddin ibn al-Munir presided over the school after al-Ibyari's death. He was counted among the greatest religious leaders of Egypt. Shaykh Izzuddin ibn Abdus-Salam said of him: "The land of Egypt is proud of two men, Ibn al-Munir in Alexandria, and Ibn Daqiq al-'Eid in Qus." Ibn al-Munir died in the year 683 A.H.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was associated with the Māliki school described above. As mentioned earlier, he became a student of Ibn al-Munir, who appointed him to teach fiqh when he found him quite qualified for the post though Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was then still a young man.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh went on during his maturity to teach Māliki fiqh in al-Azhar mosque, in addition to teaching Tasawwuf and preaching to the general masses. Ibn Farhun, a renowned Māliki scholar, compiled a biography of him in his book *al-Dibaj*. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh also wrote books on Māliki Fiqh, and al-Suyuti mentioned one of them.

### 6- Political and social aspects of his time.

Political life during the second half of the seventh century was unstable due to the continuous struggle between the Tartars and the Mamluk Sultans, which threatened Egypt during the years 670 and 702 A.H. The life of al-Iskandari began during the rule of the maritime Mamluks, which started with al-Mu'izz Abyak al-Turkmani, who died in 656 A.H.

That period was one of dictatorial rule, in which Sultans held the reigns of power and authority. Power struggles and conspiracies among Mamluk princes for the sake of ruling the country were prevalent. The population in Egypt were divided – as people have said – into two distinct groups; one was the Mamluk group which included the ruling military oligarchy, and the other included the rest of the Egyptians who had no say whatsoever in ruling the country. We believe that there was a third group which, though belonging to the people, was highly esteemed by the Sultans. This group was the real barrier between the dictatorship of the Sultans and the people. These were the faqihs and Sufis.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, as an eminent faqih and Sufi, was among this third group. He did not fear the terror of Sultans and believed that the first duty of a Ṣufi was to instruct kings of their duty to be just and to refrain from oppression if they were not following the upright path. They should be compassionate to all people, help the poor and aid them and prefer them above the rich and the worldly among the kings and princes. In this regard Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh writes: "Among the qualities of the Ṣūfīs...is that they should enjoin justice and forbid injustice and evil, especially to those who have power and authority like kings. They should serve the poor, be kind to them and to all people. Among their qualities is that they should give priority to the poor instead of to the rich and worldly..." Yet in spite of this advice, numerous Sultans of that age were a source of many hardships for the people.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh relates a personal story in *Lata'if al-Minan* indicating that in a meeting with the Sultan Mansur Lajin, who ruled Egypt from 696 to 698 H, he advised him for a long time, explaining to him that he could be just and generous and that he should show his gratitude to Allāh by establishing justice among the people and driving away hardship from them. Due to the importance of that meeting we quote here the following statement:

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says: "When I met the Sultan Mansur – Allāh have mercy on him – I said to him, 'You have to be grateful to Allāh ﷻ. Your rule is bountiful and the people admire you. Bounty is not gained or attained by kings as are justice and generosity. He said, 'What is gratitude?' I replied, "Gratitude is in relation to three: the tongue, the limbs and the heart. Gratitude of the tongue means mentioning the favors of Allāh, as when He said: "As for the favors of your Lord, mention them." Gratitude of the limbs means obeying Allāh Who granted His gifts to you, as when He said: "O family of Dawud! Work acts of gratitude." Gratitude of the heart means attesting to and realizing that any bliss or bounty either you have or the creation has comes from Allāh and none else, as when He says: "And there is no bounty which you possess except that it is from Allāh." The Sultan then asked, "What should the grateful do to be grateful and show their gratitude?" I replied, "If he has knowledge, he should show gratitude by teaching and guidance. If he is rich, he should show gratitude by being generous and sharing his wealth with the people. If he has authority, he should show gratitude by establishing justice and driving away hardship."

Thus we notice a very honorable stand for Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh in front of one of the Sultans of his time. It shows, in our opinion, his nobleness and his refraining from worldly aspirations, and his trust in Allāh and himself. In addition, the situation itself is a bright page in the history of Egyptian Ṣufism, which proves that the people did not always surrender to their despotic Sultans, but that there was always a Ṣufi like Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh who could stand up in the face of a Sultan and council him whenever he found he was in need of advice. He would persuade the Sultan to be grateful to Allāh by establishing social justice among the people and driving away hardship from them.

## 7- His death, tomb, and mosque

After a life that was devoted to calling the people to the Path of Allāh and to guiding and training the seekers (*salikin*), our Ṣufi al-Iskandāri died in the year 709 H. This date is agreed on by all biographers except al-Sha'arani, who states that it was 707 H. However, we agree with the first date since there is not enough evidence to back up the second. Some biographers specified the month in which he died, others specified the day of his death.

Imām al-Subki stated that the death of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was on the fifth month of the year 709 H. Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani said it was on the middle of the fifth month. Imām Suyuti specified the day, and said it was on the thirteenth day of the fifth month of the year 709 H. (November 19, 1309 A.D.).

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh died in Cairo, as related by Ibn Farhoun and Imām al-Subki. Imām Ibn Hajar added that his death was in the Mansouriyya School in Cairo, and Imām Suyuti agreed with him. Al-Maqrizi described that school as being inside the great hospital which was built in Bain al-Qasrayn quarter in Cairo by King Qalawoon (678-689 H) at the hand of the Prince ʿAlameddin Sangar. He ordered that it should offer lessons in the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence, in medicine, *ḥadith*, Qurʾān exegesis, and also should have a section for preaching. All of these lessons were only given by the best scholars of the time. The hospital, school, and the dome next to it were completed in the year 682 H. Professor Lane-Pool states that the building included three divisions, the mosque, the hospital, and the dome under which the founder was buried.

We are inclined to believe that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh used to teach or preach in that school, and that he died in it. The funeral procession, as Ibn Taghri al-Barri stated, was well-attended and dignified.

Al-Munawi stated that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was buried in the graveyard near to the tombs of Bani Wafa. Mr. Muhammad Ramzi specified the place of his tomb by saying: "The tomb of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh is still there in the graveyard of Sidi ʿAlī Wafa, which is under the Muqattam mountains east of the graveyard of Imām Layth. His tomb falls 300 meters southeast of Sidi ʿAlī Wafa's mosque. Next to the tomb on its western side lies a dome under which Kamal ed-Din Muḥammad, popularly known as Ibn Hammam, is buried, and on the northwest side is buried ʿAbdullāh ibn abi Gamra."

I visited his tomb when I began this research and I found it to be an open tomb which is surrounded by a falling fence. It also seemed as though the area around the tomb used to be a mosque, or some quarter for devotional worship and meditation. That supports what Kawhan stated in his book, namely, that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was buried at the foot of the Muqattam mountains in the quarter (*zawiya*) in which he used to pray.

Around the tomb of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh there are other tombs of his well-known contemporaries like the tomb of Ibn Daqiq al-ʿEid, which is not far from the tomb of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh. Shams ad-Din al-Zayyat stated that in the graveyard of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, there are also buried a lot of scholars, pious people, noblemen, and faqihs, one of which is Muhyideen al-Maghribi, father-in-law of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh.

The tomb of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh is neglected, and the Ministry of Awqaf, or others who belong to the Shādhī Path, should pay attention to it, in recognition of the value and merit of its dweller.

There is a mosque in Alexandria which bears the name of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, although Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was not buried there.

{Note: A new and modern mosque was built in the sixties over his tomb with an asphalt road leading to it. The mosque was built by the late Abdul-Halīm Mujahid and was inaugurated by Dr. Abdul-Halīm Mahmud, Ex-Rector of Azhar, and author of the first two books in this volume.}

## 8- His status

Biographers have confirmed the immense status of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh after his death as a scholar and a Ṣufi. These biographers were not all biographers of Sufis, but the majority of them were historians and writers about fiqh and its people. Possibly the testimonies of historians and writers about fiqh are more accurate concerning his status than the testimonies of Ṣufis themselves, since the testimonies of historians are less prone to bias and exaggeration and the Ṣufis might exaggerate due to their great love.

Among the first group is ʿAfif ad-Din al-Yafiʿi al-Yamani, who died in the year 768 H., and who



described Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh as: "The great Shaykh, the knower by Allāh, the expert, a leader in the two paths and the Imām of the two parties, guide of the *Tariqa*, tongue of the *Haqiqa*, and support of the purified and noble *Shari'a*." He esteemed his various books, saying they included secrets, knowledge, *Maxims*, and that they were models of excellence.

Imām Tājuddīn al-Subki, who died in 771 H., said that he was a knowledgeable Imām, who had his allusions and wonders, and that he had a firm foot in Ṣufism.

Ibn Farhoun, who died in 799 H., mentioned his fame in his book *ad-Dibaj*, which is a biography of renowned Mālikis. He said that he was knowledgeable in all branches of Islamic knowledge, such as tafsir, ḥadith, nahu, fiqh, uṣūl and others, and that he was a wonder of his time in Ṣufism. He also mentioned that a great number of people followed his Path, benefitting from him, and that he also wrote good poetry.

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, who died in 852 H., explained that he was the tongue of Ṣufism in his time, and had an awesome air about him and a great impact on the souls of people.

Abdul-Ra'uf al Munawi al-Misri (died 1031 H.) draws for us a picture of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's comprehensive achievements, saying: "He was an Imām whose crown of knowledge was lofty, his merit was renowned, well-known, and whose pearls of wisdom were spread wide. His compositions were beneficial, and memories of him will always remain fresh. He abandoned sleep, and had he only composed his book entitled *The Illumination, (on the Ceasing of Self-Direction)* and no other book, that still would have been enough to establish his position. He had the upper hand in outward knowledge and inward gnosis. He was a leader in tafsir, ḥadith, uṣūl, and an ocean of knowledge in fiqh. His sermons and words were sweet to the hearts and souls. He was primarily trained in *Shari'a*, then he grasped its wisdom until he became the leader in Ṣufism, and his leadership in both domains was honorable and well-accepted."

His Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi had foreknown that status for him when he saw his capacity and his assiduity in accompanying him. He said to him while he was still his student: "By Allāh, you will have a great station," and he said, "Stick to this Path, for by Allāh if you stick to it, you will be a Mufti (authority) in both domains (meaning *Shari'a* and *Haqiqa*)."



## CHAPTER TWO: THE ŠUFĪ LIFE OF IBN ʿATĀʾILLĀH

### 1- Introduction

We mentioned in the previous chapter the various phases of the life of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, the characteristics of his time from the political, social, and religious angles and his status. We stated that in the first phase of his life he was a student of religion in Alexandria and that he rejected Šufism. Then in the second phase of his life, when he met Abuʾl ʿAbbās al-Mursi, he became a Šufi, but he did not stop studying religion. He then became a teacher of religion in Alexandria for some time when he was considered competent for teaching. In the third phase of his life, he became a complete Šufi and guide.

The above statements indicate that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was not a Šufi from the beginning. On the contrary, he used to disbelieve in the Šufi path. What changed his psychological state and got him to accept Šufism and become one of its eminent leaders?

We were confronted with this question while writing a biography for him. Due to its importance, we decided to devote a special chapter to it, in which we shall analyze the various psychological states which he passed through and which impelled him to choose the Šufi path. We shall deal with his life as a beginner in the Path who was traveling under the guidance of his Šaykh, and we shall end the chapter by a picture of his life as a complete Sufi, guiding to the Way of Allāh ﷺ. We also indicate in it his role in the Shādhuli Šufi school in particular and in Egyptian Šufism in general. Finally, we shall mention and analyze the wonders related about him to show his status as a Šufi who had reached the end of the Path.

### 2- The beginning of his Šufi life

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh began by discrediting the Šufis, their tastes, the kind of knowledge they expressed and their means of expressing. That was due to his being brought up in the environment of *fiqh* which is bound by the outward or literal sense of the Šariʿa, and which could not swallow Šufism, since it deals with the inward and the rules governing it. His paternal grandfather was one of the *fuqaha* of his time who were intensely opposed to Šufism, as we mentioned before.

Among the Šufis opposed by Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was Šaykh Abuʾl ʿAbbās al-Mursi, the most renowned Šufi of Alexandria in his time. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh stated in this connection, “I did not believe him (meaning Abuʾl ʿAbbās). I objected to him not for anything which I heard from him or anything which was correctly attributed to him. I continued in this state until an argument arose between me and one of his followers. I said to him, “There is only the Šariʿa, and these men (the Šufis) talk about great things which the Šariʿa disagrees with...”

Thus Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh disbelieved Šaykh Abuʾl ʿAbbās not for anything he had heard from him or quoted after him, but rather as a product of his bias to *fiqh* and its partisans. At that point Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was not ready or prepared in his first phase of life as a Šufi.

However, his discussions with al-Mursi’s companions, his dispute with them, and the deep disbelief in their Šaykh all aroused his thoughts, causing him to review them within himself. That self-review became so strong that he felt oppressed for discrediting the Šaykh without any reason. He was inwardly forced to go to Abuʾl ʿAbbās al-Mursi to find out the truth about him; to judge his knowledge and to ascertain for himself whether his disbelief was well founded or not. He writes, “... the reason for my meeting with Šaykh al-Mursi was that I said to myself, after that debate with that man, ‘Let me see him, because truth has its own signs which always manifest.’ So I went to see him and I heard him speaking about the threefold nature of the *Dīn*. He said, ‘The first (part) is surrender (*Islām*), the second is faith (*Imān*), and the third is excellence (*Ihsān*). Or if you wish you could say, the first is worship (*ibada*), the second is devotion (*ubudiyya*), and the third is complete slavery (*ubuda*). Or if you wish

you could say, the first is *Shari'a*, the second is *Haqiqa*, and the third is realization (*tahaqquq*), or something of that manner. He did not cease from saying, 'or if you wish you could say...' until my mind was bewildered, and I came to know that he was drinking from a lordly spring, and Allāh erased from my heart all the negative thoughts I had about him."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh therefore accepted Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi, and recognized his knowledge and merit. His distrust of him vanished and his mind was overwhelmed by what he heard from him about the nature of Reality, which he had not tasted before. He had been a young *faqih* whose knowledge stopped at the limits of the *Shari'a*, and it did not grant him the inward peace which only comes with the knowledge of the Reality taken directly from the Divine source.

What occurred after that meeting between Ibn 'Atā'illāh and his Shaykh?

Ibn 'Atā'illāh tells us that he returned to his house that night in a state of mind which caused him to seek solitude instead of being in the company of his family. Strange ideas and pressing thoughts occupied him and his intellect was incapable of deciphering them. He said, "That night I returned to my home but found no desire in me to be with my wife as was my habit. I experienced a strange meaning within me which I could not comprehend, so I went to an isolated place and looked into the sky, its stars, and what Allāh has created in it. That urged me to return back to him."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh was absorbed by one of those unique existential states of being, a state of compelling anxiety whose reality is incomprehensible and whose cause is unknown. He expressed it as being a strange meaning which he did not know. It could have arisen from his reflection upon the universe and its Creator, and his attempts at understanding the unknown, and other similar thoughts which came to him unrelentingly. He then plunged into introspection in the attempt and hope to understand the reality in the depths of his soul, but he came to nothing and found neither benefit nor the answer which he hoped for.

This state of anxiety, in our view, is the beginning of his walking the *Ṣūfī* path. It was caused by the interaction of contradictory urges, because on the one side, he started contemplating existential problems, and on the other hand, he could not find any answers for these problems. Like other Sufis, he found a way out for himself through resorting to Allāh ﷻ. Emile Boutroux writes: "The starting point and the first instant (in relation to the *Ṣūfī* psychological aspect of life) is a psychological state which is hard to define... It is a state of an unexplained urge and anxiety which is severe and sometimes even painful. It cannot be specified or interpreted with regard to subject or motive... It is a state of turning to the unknown, of turning to the heart which the mind cannot bear. For the *Ṣūfī*, it is a constant and deep state which drives away rest and sleep." Boutroux later adds that it drives the *Ṣūfī* to ponder the limitless, eternal, perfect being (Allāh) as being his or her supreme wish and desire. This is what *Ṣūfīs* call, "the resorting to Allāh."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh could not but resort to Allāh because of his incapacity, as he could not reach satisfaction of the heart by his thinking or knowledge.

He consequently thought of returning to Shaykh al-Mursi, as he was a man who knew Allāh and "knows the lanes of heaven." He could take him as his ideal model and it was only he who could drive away his suspicions and doubts.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh continues, "I went to him and I was given permission to enter and see him again. When I entered into his room, he stood up and welcomed me cheerfully and generously, so much so that I thought I was unworthy of his greeting. The first thing I said to him was: 'Sidi, I love you by Allāh.' He replied, 'May Allāh love you as you love me.' Then I complained to him of my distress and depression. He said, 'A slave's states are four and no more. Bliss, hardship, obedience and disobedience. If you are in bliss, you are required to be grateful to Allāh. If you are in hardship, Allāh requires of you to be patient. If you are obedient, Allāh requires you to see that obedience as being a grant from Him to you. If you are disobedient, Allāh requires of you to repent and seek forgiveness.' I

left his presence feeling that my distress was like a garment which was removed from me. Some time later he asked me, 'How are you?' I replied, 'I search for distress and do not find it.' He replied in words of verse:

My night is luminous by Your face,  
while darkness overwhelms the people.  
People are in the grasp of darkness,  
while we are in the illumination of daylight.

Then he told me, 'Stick (to the Path assiduously), for by Allāh, if you stick to it you will be an authority in both domains.' He meant the domain of outward knowledge of the *Shari'a*, and the domain of inward gnosis of the *Haqiqa*."

When we review these statements in which Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh describes his second meeting with his Shaykh, we see that the psychological anxiety which he had was changed into a state of psychological stability. The reason for that stability was that he went back to his Shaykh with love filling his heart. He complained to him of the distress which weighed down on him and which caused – as it also causes those who tread the Ṣūfī path – some sort of a psychological complex. In this connection, Suhrawardī states in his book '*Awarif ul-Ma'arif*':

"If a student keeps a secret which he does not reveal to his Shaykh, either explicitly or implicitly, he will have an inward obstacle on his Path. When he speaks that secret to the Shaykh, that obstacle will be removed and disappear."

Shaykh al-Mursi, due to his knowledge of the states of the heart, was able to drive away all the distress from the hearts. He had welcomed him so cheerfully that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh felt undeserving of his warm and generous welcome, and it left a great impact on him. Then his Shaykh proceeded to determine and diagnose his inward state, and discovered his brightness and readiness and potential to be a great Ṣūfī and faqih, speaking in both sciences with authority.

Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi was therefore a spiritual doctor, who knew the states of the hearts, their perfections, defects, maladies, treatments, and was fully capable of giving guidance. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh took him as an ideal in his Ṣūfī life, and looked at him with much esteem and adoration. He said, "Our Shaykh, Imām, and leader in this affair (i.e. tasawwuf), the unique one of his time, the scholar of his era, the sign-post of the gnostics, the pivot of the guided, the revealer of the sublimity of the *Haqiqa* and the marks of the *Tariqa*, knowledgeable of the Names and letters and circles, gatherer of inward and outward knowledge, our master and patron Shihabuddin Abu'l 'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Umar al-Ansari al-Mursi ash-Shādhḡuli, may Allāh sanctify his secret. It was from him that we gained light and upon his tracks we followed the Path. It was by him that our secrets were moved to catch up with those before us, and by him that our tongues were made to speak. He planted knowledge in our heart and its fruit became ripe and its scent became fragrant. It is he who, with the grace of Allāh, promised us and helped us to speak with authority in both branches of knowledge. Only to him are we related and upon him in this affair do we depend."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh accompanied Shaykh al-Mursi for 12 years, and from him he took the Shādhḡuli *Tariqa*. The following section outlines a picture of his life as student, receiving guidance and directives from the Shaykh.

### 3- His life as a wayfarer

The basis of the way of al-Mursi (the successor of ash-Shādhḡuli and Shaykh of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh) was gathering one's concentration on Allāh, non-dispersal, perseverance in spiritual retreat and invocation. He would have a way with every *murid*, and would place the *murid* on the way most suitable for him.



He did not like the *murid* who did not earn his own living. In addition, he would not prevent the *murid* from seeing other Shaykhs. He used to quote his teacher ash-Shādhḍhulī's saying: "Accompany me, and I will not prevent you from accompanying others. For if you find a spring sweeter than this, than go to it."

Among his eminent qualities as a Shaykh was that he always honored his students when they came to him, and would prohibit that any student be kept waiting. He used to say: "A murid always comes with enthusiasm and keen aspiration, so if he is told to wait, then his aspiration might die down and become cold." He would not direct the murid to difficulties and would not ask him to take up any hard tasks. He would quote his Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan: "The true Man is not he who directs you to your hardship. Rather, the true Man is he who directs you to your ease." This attitude was no doubt a strong cause for the love of his students for him and their persistent companionship with him.

Such was Abu'l 'Abbās's dealings with his students, among whom was Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh. He used sound pedagogical methods, uniting them to Allāh and mapping out for them a specific path unique to each.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was furthermore always very close and assiduous in keeping his company, even more so than other students of the Shaykh, and for that reason al-Mursi loved him greatly.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh mentions to us some of his states on the Path and the directives that the Shaykh gave him. For example, in the beginning of his path he used to suffer from continual doubts and suspicions about purity and whether his ablution was complete or not. He could not overcome this doubt except with the guidance of the Shaykh. In this respect, he writes: "I often doubted the completeness of my ablution, and the Shaykh came to know of it. He told me, 'I heard that you doubt your ablution.' I said yes. He then said, 'This group (the Ṣūfis) play with the Shaytan, and the Shaytan doesn't play with them.' Some time later I came to his place and he said to me, 'What is the state of your suspicions, do you still have them?' and I said I still did. Then he told me, 'If you do not get yourself rid of them, then do not come to us again.' That remark was hard on me, and that caused the suspicions to vanish."

Sometimes unbecoming thoughts used to cross his mind persuading him to pursue a desire (open or hidden), or other types of the ego's ambitions. One of these was his desire to live in divestment (*tajrid*) without any outward means of livelihood. That was because he found himself occupied with the study of outward knowledge and imagined he would not be able to walk the Path unless he abandoned his studies and became completely devoted to the company of his Shaykh.

As Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi used to draw for every student his own Path, so in this case he drew for Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh a way out of his desire for divestment. He advised him not to follow his desire, but instead to remain where Allāh had placed him. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in this respect: "I went to him (Shaykh al-Mursi) with the desire for divestment in my mind. I convinced myself that arrival to Allāh could not be attained except through it. So when I met him, he said to me without my telling him anything: "A man from Qus named Ibn Nashi accompanied us, who was a teacher and a deputy judge. He tasted something of the fruits of this Path through me, and said, 'I want to leave what I am involved in and concentrate on keeping your company.' I replied to him, 'The matter is not as you imagine. Rather, remain in the position Allāh has placed you in, and what has been decreed for you will no doubt come to you through us.'"

"Then the Shaykh spoke to me and continued: 'This is the way of the utterly veracious (*siddiqin*). They do not leave anything on their own accord, but let Allāh take charge of that.'

"I left his presence feeling as if Allāh had washed away those thoughts from my heart. They were as a garment over me which was taken off by his words. From then on I was satisfied in what I was involved in."

We would not be far from the truth if we claim that this directive in behavior from Shaykh al-Mursi had formulated Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's Ṣūfī doctrine in its entirety. In this way the practical Ṣūfī life had a great impact on his theoretical Ṣūfī ideas and doctrines.



That directive asserted that the Ṣūfī be satisfied and content with Allāh in whatever station He places him. He should not expedite moving from one station to another by his own will. He has to surrender in his behavior and attitude to the wisdom of Allāh in whatever station He chooses for him.

As long as Allāh ﷻ had placed Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh in the search for and study of exterior knowledge, then it would not be courteous, according to the Principles of Ṣūfī courtesy, for him to desire leaving it and wishing to live in divestment. For in that he would be following a hidden caprice. Who knows! Allāh might have wanted him to remain in his station for a certain matter to be completed in Allāh's knowledge.

This directive also formulated Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh's theory of 'dropping of self-direction.' He often repeated the following statement: "Your desire for divestment while Allāh has placed you in a means of livelihood is a hidden passion; and your desire to have a means of livelihood while Allāh has placed you in divestment is a fall from lofty aspiration."

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh used always to place the Shaykh in front of his eyes whenever he fell into a hardship. This is in no way strange, as he was always looking to his Shaykh as an ideal model in behavior and ethics. He states how one time he was affected by the behavior of his Shaykh and how he always followed him:

"As for his forbearance, he never retaliated for himself nor was he ever on his ego's side. I once entered his presence when he said to me: 'What do you say of so-and-so (referring to someone who had caused the Shaykh great harm)? Some of his friends came to me (who were in a high position in society and who used to frequent the Shaykh's company), and told me, 'This man has harmed you and caused you many difficulties, and we want to beat him and disgrace him in the two cities.' So what do you say yourself, O Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh?"

"I replied to him, 'That would be good.' He refused and said to me, 'Why did you say that?' I replied, 'To seek retaliation from him.' He replied, 'I do not retaliate from anyone. Never follow me with a desire to retaliate from someone in your heart.' So I felt humiliated. Nobody ever harmed us after that. That man himself fell into a hardship and my soul started to rejoice, but I quickly remembered the Shaykh's words, 'I never retaliate on anyone,' almost as if I could literally hear them being spoken. So the desire for retaliation left me.

"It happened that 15 years later, the man who harmed the Shaykh strove to harm us. But he fell into a hardship, and Allāh saved us from having to retaliate against him and from rejoicing in his hardship. And the Shaykh used to previously tell me, 'This person whom I asked you about earlier, he will try to do the same with you as he did with me. So do the same to him as we did with him.' These are the teachings of the great men among the Ṣūfis, which are imprinted in the hearts of their students. Until, when the occasion comes wherein those words could be applied, Allāh re-surfaces them as if you hear them in that very moment. It might be that Allāh brings the Shaykh into your thinking, through which He talks to you, or maybe He might bring his memory to the imagination disconnected from forms, or maybe he actually appears physically when the difficulty occurs, so that the *murid* is strengthened and guided aright."

In such a way Abu'l ʿAbbās passed on to his students a lesson in etiquette, namely, that one should not seek retaliation for himself, but instead endure people's harm, and not rejoice in their disasters. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh followed that directive faithfully. Among his directives also was that Ṣūfis should give up seeking their rights and dues, apologize to people and not get people to apologize to them, should stand by and support people and not support themselves, should endure harm from others and not harm others, bear (the difficulties) that come from people and not let anyone have to bear him...all of that while maintaining a clear conscience with no grudges against anyone.

In his *Hikam* (*Ṣūfī Maxims*), he summarizes his philosophy in this respect and speaks to the *muridun* saying: "If it pains you that people do not come to you, or only come to you with harm and censure, then return to the knowledge that Allāh has of you (and be content with Allāh's knowledge). But if you are not content with Allāh's knowledge of you, then your calamity at not being content with His knowledge is greater than your calamity coming from the hands of the people." And he also said: "He only caused harm to come from people's hands (to you) so that you not repose with them. He wanted to incite you away from them so that nothing preoccupy you from being with Him."

We can summarize everything that preceded by saying that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh – as is the case with all other *muridun* – surrendered to the guidance of a perceptive Shaykh, who would supervise him and who was a knower of the Path to Allāh. He was always striving against his self and driving away unbecoming thoughts and wishes, out of a desire to arrive at the perfection of character. We can consider his first meeting with the Shaykh as the turning point from a normal life to a Ṣūfī life. Robert Thouless, a contemporary psychologist, calls this change 'mystical conversion,' i.e., the change from the normal religious life to the Ṣūfī life due to the strong and continuous attraction which the Ṣūfī experiences towards the more sublime. It is a sudden change that overwhelms the Ṣūfī and singles him out from others. It is different from what he calls 'ordinary conversion,' which is the change from a non-religious life to a religious life.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, as we have seen, was leading an ordinary religious life as a *faqih* in the first phase of life. At that time, he was against the Ṣūfīs and used to attack them, so he was not ready yet for *tasawwuf*. He was not ready for that sudden change from his current ordinary life to the other Ṣūfī life until he met Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi, whose words on the nature of reality had a far-reaching impact on him. That impact urged him to contemplate his inward self and the universe, and its Creator and the marvels He originated in it. So he separated himself from the company of people and began to contemplate, trying to find an answer or an explanation which would satisfy his need to know and give his soul its much needed tranquility, diving deeply down into his self. When he could not find a way to solve his existential problem, and when his restlessness overpowered him, he set out to return to Shaykh Abu'l 'Abbās a second time, seeking from him a remedy for his agitated soul in its search towards understanding the unknown reality in life and the creation. He took the Shaykh as an ideal in gnosis and behavior, and came towards him with a heart full of love so that he might travel under his guidance on the Ṣūfī Way. And indeed, the Shaykh was able to cure his ailing soul and point him to the right direction. So his agitation faded away, his self found serenity, and when he searched for distress later on he could not find it!

His Shaykh did not cease taking him step-by-step upon the Path until divine gnosis (*ma'rifa*) was instilled in his heart and its fruits ripened. There is no doubt that arriving at the direct and experiential gnosis of Allāh was the most sublime level Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh reached, which is equally true for all Sufis on the Way to Allāh.

#### 4- His life as a complete Ṣūfī

In this way, and under the guidance of his Shaykh al-Mursi, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh became a complete Ṣūfī, one who has arrived at the Goal with gnosis of the Divine Reality. After that, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh began his role as a Ṣūfī Guide in his own right. He concentrated his life endeavors to calling to the Way of Allāh and upbringing the *muridun* in the Shādhḍhuli Path, and he had a tremendous position in it!

##### a) His role in the Shādhḍhuli Tariqa

As we said earlier, Egypt during the second half of the seventh century (Hijra) was an important center of *tasawwuf*, to which Ṣūfīs from other Islamic countries came, as they could find a response to their call and kindness from the Sultans.

Among the most eminent Ṣūfis to come to Egypt was the Shaykh ‘Alī Abu’l Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhulī, together with a group of his students. They settled in Alexandria around 642 H. and established the well-known Ṣūfī school which is named after him. Among the most eminent of ash-Shādhḍhulī’s students who came with him was Abu’l ‘Abbās al-Mursī. He took over supervision of the Tariqa during Abu’l Ḥasan’s life and after his death, and carried it on until his own death in the year 686 H. He had another very important student, the Qutb Yāqūt al-‘ARSHI, who was also a transmitter of the path (Note: see previous section of this book) but who left no books. However, his successor was his most notable Egyptian student, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh as-Sakandāri.

The Ṣūfism of ash-Shādhḍhulī, al-Mursī, and Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh, the pillars of the Shādhḍhulī School, was removed from the current of Ibn Arabī’s school and its “Oneness of Being.” None of the Shādhḍhulī masters promulgate that philosophy. This did not mean, however, that there were no links between the two schools, and in fact they both sprouted from the same source in the Maghrib, namely, the very well-known and saintly Ṣūfī, Shu’ayb Abu Madyan al-Ghawth al-Tilimsani, who died in 594 H. His doctrine expresses quite explicitly the annihilation in the Divine Oneness. Ibn Arabī was one of his students, as were many of ash-Shādhḍhulī’s Shaykhs.

In addition to the above, there were meetings in Egypt between ash-Shādhḍhulī and some of Ibn Arabī’s companions in which they exchanged views about Ṣūfī truths. For example, Ibn Ayyad ash-Shādhḍhulī narrates of a meeting between Sadr ud-Din al-Qunawi (the student of Ibn Arabī) and ash-Shādhḍhulī, and writes: “When Shaykh al-Qunawi, who was the student of Ibn Arabī, came to Egypt, he met with the Shaykh Abu’l Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhulī. He spoke in his presence about various branches of knowledge while the Shaykh (ash-Shādhḍhulī) sat with lowered head, until Sadr ud-Din finished his words. Then the Shaykh lifted his head, and said, ‘Tell me. Where is the Qutb of the time now, and who is his friend, and what is his knowledge?’ So the Shaykh Sadr ud-Din became quiet and could not answer.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh himself also relates in his book *Lata’if al-Minan* of the meeting between Abu’l Alam Yasin, another of Ibn Arabī’s companions, with ash-Shādhḍhulī, in the gathering of ‘Izz ibn Abdus-Salam.

In spite of all that, however, Imām ash-Shādhḍhulī and his followers, including Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh, remained on one side, and Ibn Arabī and his followers remained on another side (separate from one another). It appears that because of ash-Shādhḍhulī’s sticking firmly to the Qur’ān and Sunna, he did not approve of Ibn Arabī’s tasawwuf, because it differed (albeit only outwardly) with these two principles.

As much as ash-Shādhḍhulī and his followers (including Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh) were far from Ibn Arabī and his theories, they were in the same degree close to the tasawwuf of Imām al-Ghazālī, which was fully surrounded by Qur’ān and Sunnah. We relate here some of the statements made by Imām Shādhḍhulī and Imām Mursī to show how much they esteemed Imām al-Ghazālī, and how they would direct their students to take from his example and path. For example, ash-Shādhḍhulī used to say to his muridun: “If you have any need from Allāh, appeal to Him through the Shaykh Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī, so that the need will be fulfilled for his sake.” And he said also, “The book of *Ihya*’ (by Ghazālī) bequeathes knowledge, and the book of *Qut al-Qulub* (by al-Makki) bequeathes light.” And Abu’l ‘Abbās al-Mursī would say: “We bear witness to his occupying the station of greater veracity and sainthood (*siddiqiyya ‘udhma*).”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh also mentioned Imām Ghazālī in many of his writings, always with respect and reverence, just as his two predecessors had. He was also influenced by him in his ideas, as we shall make clear in the second part of this book.



It should be noted that although ash-Shādhḍhuli, al-Mursi, and Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh took the approach of al-Ghazālī in most of their ideas, they nevertheless did not censure or attack those Ṣūfis who subscribed to the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wujud* ("Oneness of Existence"), or Divine indwelling, nor Suhrawardī's Illuminationist Philosophy (Abu'l 'Abbās used to love his poetry and quote it), nor Abu Yazid al-Bistami and those like him, who were known for their sometimes extreme outbursts and statements. That could either be because they did not like to fill their time with judging others' doctrines, or because they thought of some of them with honour and high status, such as Abu Yazid and Hallaj whom – as Professor Massignon writes – ash-Shādhḍhuli and Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and other later Shuyukḥ used to esteem. Also, they could have considered those who made extreme statements as being overwhelmed and taken away from their intellects, and not to be held responsible for their words, which if taken literally would be unacceptable. Their position would be like the one of Imām Junayd, who used to find excuses for them and defend them, as al-Khuldi relates:

"It was said to Junayd, 'Abu Yazid says: 'Glory be to me, I am my Lord ﷻ,' to which Junayd responded, 'The man was consumed and overwhelmed in beholding the Divine Intense Majesty, so he uttered what he was consumed with. Allāh has caused him to forget his own self (in that moment), so he only saw Allāh and mentioned Him.'"

The Shādhḍhuli Path, to which our Shaykh Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh is related, is based on five principles:

- 1) inward and outward God-consciousness,
- 2) following the Prophetic example in words and acts,
- 3) not looking upon people in their coming to and going away from one,
- 4) contentment with Allāh in moments of plenty and scarcity, and
- 5) returning to Allāh in good times and bad.

Also, among its most eminent doctrines is the "*dropping and ceasing of self-management and personal choice*," which is actually the foundation on which the whole Path is established. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh expanded and deepened it, and made it a complete doctrine in Ṣūfism.

Neither Imām abu Ḥaṣan ash-Shādhḍhuli, nor his successor Shaykh al-Mursi, nor Shaykh al-Mursi's other successor, the Qutb Yāqūt al-'Arshi, left behind any books. All that they left behind were their oral statements and teachings, and some supplications and litanies memorized by their students. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was the first to gather their sayings, advice, and supplications in writing, and to compile their biographies. He therefore preserved the Shādhḍhuli spiritual heritage, and without him, that heritage would have been lost. In addition, he was the first to compile complete books dealing with the teachings of the Tariqa, both theoretical and practical; hence, his immense importance in the Tariqa and its explication to all who came after him.

And if Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh had this importance in preserving the heritage of the Tariqa theoretically and practically, he also had the important distinction of circulating and spreading it in Egypt and other Islamic countries. In other words, his importance lay in continuation and preservation of the Tariqa through giving the '*Ahd*, or 'initiation by the hand.' He succeeded Abu'l 'Abbās al-Mursi in giving the initiation to numerous students who went into many Islamic countries and spread the Tariqa. All of the Shādhḍhuli chains of transmission in Egypt either go back to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, or to the Qutb Yāqūt al-'Arshi, another student of al-Mursi, and the majority of the chains of transmission in the Maghrib go back to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh.

The author of the book *Ta'tir al-Anfas* writes: "As for the followers of Shaykh al-Mursi, they are countless. The most eminent of them were Sidi Yāqūt al-'Arshi and Sidi Tājuddīn Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh as-Sakandāri. Consequently, the Shādhḍhuli Tariqa emanated only from them. Sidi Muhammad Wafa took



the Path from Sidi Dawud al-Bakhili, who took it from Sidi Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh, who took it from Sidi Abu'l-Abbās, who took it from Sidi Abu'l Ḥasan ash-Shādhḍhuli (may Allāh be well-pleased with them all). Sidi Shamsuddin al-Hanafi took the Path from Nasiruddin Ibn al-Muballaq, who took it from his grandfather Shihab al-Muballaq, who took it from Sidi Yāqūt al-'Arsh, who took it from the Shaykh Abu'l °Abbās al-Mursi. From these two (Sidi Muhammad Wafa' and Sidi Shamsuddin al-Hanafi) the Shādhḍhuli Tariqa split and spread wide... Most of the people of the Maghrib took the Tariqa from Shaykh Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh."

After going through numerous writings and chains of transmission of later Shādhḍhulis in Egypt, we have noticed that the majority of them are linked to Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh, because Shihab al-Muballaq, who took the Tariqa from Yāqūt al-'Arshi, also had a connection of transmission to Sidi Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh. We can consequently say that all the Shādhḍhuli Paths are connected to Shaykh Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh.

### ***b) His role in Egyptia Šūfism***

In addition to being a main pillar in the building of the Shādhḍhuli Way, Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh was the most conspicuous representative of Egyptian Šūfism in the second half of the seventh century Hijra.

The first Šufi in this respect (who planted the seeds of Šūfism in Egypt) is Dhu'n Nun al-Misri, who died in 245 H. He was the first Egyptian Šufi who talked about the stations and states of the Path. His knowledge was such that all the Shuyukḥ took from him and depended on him. Two other Šūfis shared in his role and heritage, and they were Abu Bakr al-Zaqqāq al-Misri and Abu'l Ḥasan ibn Bannan al-Hammāl (d. 316H.).

During the fourth and fifth centuries, the Šūfī movement went on spreading in Egypt. Among its eminent leaders were Abu "Alī al-Rudhbari (d. 322H.), Abu'l Khayr al-Aqṭa' (d. 343H.), Abu 'Alī al-Katib (d. 340H.), Abu'l Ḥasan ad-Dinawari (d. 331H.), Abu Bakr ar-Ramli an-Nabulusi (d. 363 H.), Ibn Tarjuman (d. 448H.), and Abu'l Qasim as-Samit (d. 427H.).

In the sixth century Hijra there appeared a large Šufi school in Upper Egypt, whose founder Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh later recognized and esteemed. It was founded by Abdul-Rahim al-Qunna'i (d. 592H.), who was, as al-Mundiri relates, a very notable and well-known worshipper. After him, the school was led by Shaykh Abu'l Ḥasan as-Sabbagh (d. 613H.), who had a great number of followers at that time in Upper Egypt.

One of the most eminent Šūfis of the century in which Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh lived was Sharafuddin Umar ibn al-Farid, who was rightly given the title "Sultan of the Lovers," and who died in the year 632 H.

When Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh was raised in Alexandria, there were in it a great number of Šūfis known for their piety and scupulousness, such as Abu'l Qasim al-Qubbari al-Māliki (d. 662 H.), Yāqūt al-'Arsh al-Ḥabashi (d. 732 H.), Sharafuddin al-Busayri, author of the famous *Burda* (d. 695 H.), who was a student of Shaykh al-Mursi, and whose poetry in praise of the Shaykh al-Mursi Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh quoted in *Lata'if al-Minan*.

In the lifetime of Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh, the Šūfī movement spread and flourished, and there were many Šūfī schools and orders, such as the Tariqa Rifa'iyya of Shaykh Aḥmad Rifa'i who died in Iraq in 570 H., the Tariqa Aḥmadiyya of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Badawi who came to Egypt in 634 H. and died 675 H., and the Tariqa Burhamiyya (which was a purely Egyptian school) of Shaykh Ibrahim Dasuqi al-Qurashi who died 676 H.

Ibn °Aṭā°Illāh also participated in spreading the Šufi movement in Egypt in his time, as the leader of the Shādhḍhuli Tariqa after Imām Shādhḍhuli and Imām Mursi. It seemed however that many of the Šūfis in his time were actually pretenders, and were not qualified to represent the true tasawwuf. That is why we find him censuring them in some of his writings, revealing their false pretences and warning his students against them.

We have noticed the following after scrutinizing all sayings and doctrines of Egyptian Ṣūfīs from the third until the seventh century (of the Hijra):

1- None of them advocated or taught the doctrine of Pantheism or Divine incarnation. That was due, in our view, to their environment in Egypt, in which people relied solely on the Qur'ān and Prophetic Sunnah, and rejected any other sources for their teachings.

2- The Tasawwuf of each of them was clear of all foreign non-Islamic influences, so that their tasawwuf represents pure Islamic Ṣūfism. Egypt at that time was far from foreign doctrines which were spread in India and Persia. That was contrary to early Persian Ṣūfīs, who lived in various Persian cities, eg. Isfahan, Shiraz, etc. They were influenced by the ancient religions and creeds and their Tasawwuf was mixed with foreign elements.

3- All Egyptian Ṣūfīs were characterized by the special attention they paid to the moral practical side of Ṣūfism without the indulgence in the theoretical aspects. This would explain why there were no Ṣūfīs in Egypt who got involved in theoretical pursuits, like Hallaj, Suhrawardi, Muhyideen ibn Arabi, Sadrudeen al-Qunawi, 'Afif ad-Din al-Tilimsani, Ibn Sab'een, and other Ṣūfīs who mixed their Tasawwuf with philosophy.

The proof of the preference of Egyptian Ṣūfīs for the moral practical aspect of tasawwuf instead of the doctrinal and theoretical was that when Ibn Arabi and Qunawi came to Egypt, they did not find any acceptance or echoes for their words. No Egyptian became a student of Ibn Arabi or his followers. On the contrary, other representatives of tasawwuf whose teachings dealt with the moral and practical, such as al-Wasiti, al-Badawi, ad-Dasuqi, ash-Shādhḍhuli, found resounding echoes and acceptance. Their words and teachings flourished and took root in Egypt from the seventh century Hijra to the present time.

What was true of Egyptian Ṣūfīs in general was also true of Ibn 'Atā'illāh:

1) He never advocated pantheism or Divine incarnation or hypostasis between the Creator and the created. Rather, he was fully in line with the Sunna and the Ash'ari doctrine. In this respect we could say that he was linked with Egyptian Ṣūfism first and to the Maghribi Shādhḍhuli doctrine second. Both are based on the Qur'ān and Prophetic Sunna.

Imām Suyuti writes in this connection: "The sayings of Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh and his books revolve around the Qur'ān and Sunna, are bound with Shari'a, and reject all ideas which are against the Shari'a." He also said: "If you look into the *Risala* of Imām Qushayri, the statements of Imām Shādhḍhuli, and the books of Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh, you will never find a word like that (such as Absolute Oneness of Creator and created, or the eternity of the world, or the everlastingness of spirits, or other ideas out of the teachings of Islām, nor any evidence of philosophical Ṣūfism like that of Ibn Sina). If any such words about the "Oneness of Being" are found, then what they mean is the Oneness of Allāh, and that all existence in its reality comes from Him, not what those others mean (i.e., that the Creator and creation are one)."

2) His Ṣūfism was a pure Islamic Ṣūfism, free from foreign influences and ideologies, for he was brought up in a purely Islamic environment. Furthermore, he followed the tasawwuf of Imām Shādhḍhuli, which had no place for foreign influences. He lived in Egypt, in which supremacy belonged to the schools of Ahl us-Sunna, and the belief system of Imām al-Ash'ari, and where other doctrines were rendered unacceptable, such as the Shi'a, Imāmiya, and Isma'iliya. We can thus say that his Ṣūfism was a purely Islamic Sunni Tasawwuf, aiming first and last at moral elevation and spiritual enrichment. He also had an Egyptian spirit in his style and in expressing the Egyptian life in his time.

3) His Ṣūfism pays great attention to the practical side. He wrote books about Ṣūfi exercises like *Dhikr*, *Khalwa* (seclusion), etc., which are practiced by the Shādhḍhulis to this day.

Shaykh Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh elevated the standard of Egyptian Sūfism, in that his doctrine prevailed in Egypt in his time, and also his views and theories were kept alive and spread wide to other Islamic lands at the hands of his students and successors, and also by the interpreters of his book *al-Hikam*, about which we have much to say in the following chapter.

Although neither Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh or his Shaykh taught Pantheism or incarnation, they however were not safe from the attacks and censures of Ibn Taymiya who, it was said, wrote a book against Imām al-Shādhḍhuli. It is also said that there was a dispute between him and Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, and, in what follows, we shall analyze that dispute.

### *c) The Dispute between him and Ibn Taymiya*

Our Sūfi Imām al-Iskandāri was a contemporary of Ibn Taymiya (661-728 H.), who used to actively assault Sūfis and wrote many books retorting to their sayings. He exaggerated on many occasions in his animosity against them. He even accused some of preaching doctrines of pantheism and divine incarnation: Sūfis such as Hallaj, Ibn al-Farid, Ibn ʿArabi, ʿAfif ad-Din Tilimsani, and others who walked their ways.

It is, however, strange to find Ibn Taymiya casting blame and censure on Imām Shādhḍhuli and his school, because his school, as we mentioned above, is a Sunni Sūfi school based entirely on the principles of Qurʾān and the Prophetic Sunna. No exaggerated aberrations have ever been related to its followers, that they should be placed together with pantheists and incarnationists. It is also said that Ibn Taymiya wrote a book against what Imām Shādhḍhuli said in his “Greater Litany” (*Hizb ul-Kabir*).

Alusi, in his book *Illuminating the Eyes*, explained that, and wrote that Ibn Taymiya criticized some of the statements of Imām Shādhḍhuli in his Litany. Alusi mentioned these statements and Ibn Taymiya’s criticism of them, and then went on to add that those statements have satisfactory interpretations (in contrast to what Ibn Taymiya thought).

It was therefore natural that there would be a dispute between Ibn Taymiya and Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh. They were contemporaries: one of them a devoted enemy of the Sūfis, and the other their spokesperson. The first criticized Imām Shādhḍhuli, and the second esteemed and defended him. About this dispute, Ibn Hajar writes: “...Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh strongly refuted Ibn Taymiya’s sayings.” Karl Brockelmann also said that Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was one of the strongest opponents of Ibn Taymiya.

With us, there is a statement of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, and it is highly probable that it was Ibn Taymiya who he had in mind when he made that statement. He warns his murideen about listening to the enemies of Sūfis or those who falsely accuse them, and says: “My brother, never listen to those who are enemies of the Sūfis, or who belittle them. Otherwise, you will fall from the eyes of Allāh and will deserve His anger. Indeed, Sūfis have sat with Allāh on the basis of truth, sincerity, loyalty, and watchfulness of the breaths...they submitted their reigns to Him, placed themselves between His Hands, and abandoned seeking victory for themselves out of modesty before His Divinity. They are wholly sufficed with His Dominance, so that He did for them what they could not do for themselves. He fought those who fought against them, and conquered those who waged war against them. Allāh has tried this group (the Sūfis) through the people of external learning, among whom it is rare that an illuminated soul could be found...so beware of them, and run from them as you would run from a lion.”

### *d) Wonders related about him*

Some biographers of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh attempted to show another side of his Sūfi life besides those aspects which we have already mentioned. They stated some miraculous wonders related about him and considered them proof of his high status as a perfected Sūfi who has arrived to gnosis of Allāh.

Ibn Hajar quotes Imām Dhahabi as saying: “It was said that three people were on their way to the session of Imām Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, and one of them said, ‘If my family would be taken care of, I would go



into a life of divestment.' The second one said, 'I pray and fast, but do not find any trace of holiness in me.' And the third one said, 'My prayer does not please me, so how can it please Allāh?' When those three walked into the session, Ibn 'Atā'illāh said, 'and among people, there are those who say...' and he repeated their words exactly."

One realizes after examining this statement of Imām Ibn Hajar that Ibn 'Atā'illāh was able to grasp the hidden thoughts. This ability, in our view, is a grant which is given by Allāh to a select few, namely, those whose hearts have been purified from distractions and impurities. No one who knows the true reality of the Ṣūfī can deny this special type of persipacity; for, if the Ṣūfī strives against his lower self, conquers his selfish desires and remains assiduous in the invocation, then his spirit rises to new heights, and he acquires a novel kind of perception unlike any other. For that reason, it is not far-fetched to accept that Ibn 'Atā'illāh, whose soul and heart were purified through his Ṣūfī training, had acquired that type of visionary insight. Furthermore, through this perception, he was able to perceive and grasp the thoughts that circulated between the mentioned three men and to repeat their statement word for word. In the Ṣūfī technical vocabulary, this type of perception is given the name *firasa* (persipacity), which to the Ṣūfis means the heart's perceiving and witnessing the unseen realms by the light of Allāh (cast in it), in accordance with the Prophetic statement: "Be wary of the *firasa* of the one confirmed in belief, for he sees with the light of Allāh." It is not actualised except for the one whose heart has been purified from all attachments and distractions, as the Shaykh Aḥmad Zarruq writes:

"That which is termed *firasa* in the religion is a light of *imān* which expands in the heart, and allows its owner to differentiate between things and discern their realities. For every believer, there is a portion, but no one arrives at its reality except one whose heart is free from wordly attachments and impurities..."

al-Munawi relates two other occurrences, one of which is during Ibn 'Atā'illāh's lifetime, and the other after his earthly passing. He narrates:

- 1) "And among his wonders which are related is that Kamal ibn Hammam visited his grave and read Surat Hud until coming to the Words of Allāh: "...and among them are the wretched and the blissful," and Ibn 'Atā'illāh answered him from under his grave with a loud voice: "Oh Kamal, there is no wretched among us." Afterwards Kamal willed that he be buried there.
- 2) "And among his wonders which are related is that a student of his went on the Pilgrimage, and he saw his Shaykh (Ibn 'Atā'illāh) going around the Ka'aba, behind the Station (of Ibrāhīm upon him be peace), between the two hills, and in the hill of 'Arafat. When he returned after his pilgrimage to Egypt, he asked if the Shaykh had gone to pilgrimage while he was away, and they replied no. He went to him, greeted him, and the Shaykh said to him, 'Who did you see in your travels?' and he said, 'I saw you, Sidi, wherever I looked or went.' The Shaykh smiled and said, 'The macrocosmic man fills the world, and had he called the Qutb from some remote corner, he would have responded.'"

In these two narrations we are faced with two people: Kamal ibn Hammam and an unnamed student of his. The first states that he heard the voice of Ibn 'Atā'illāh from his grave, and the second that he saw his Shaykh everywhere he went in the Pilgrimage and wherever he looked, even though his Shaykh had not gone on Pilgrimage or left Egypt.

However, can the voice of a dead man be heard from his grave in such a way? Or was Ibn 'Atā'illāh, during his lifetime, one of those for whom long distances were folded short so that he could move supernaturally between Egypt and the Hijaz in such a short time as to elude anyone's eyes?

In fact, this question is one about which the modern Muslim scholars differ greatly. For as we find the Mu'tazila denying any sort of these supernatural occurrences in nature, we also find the Ash'aris and the other traditional Islamic schools of thought (*Ahl us-Sunna*) believing in them and accepting their



reality. Each group supports their views with proof-texts from the Qur'ān and Prophetic Sunna, or even with purely intellectual and rational arguments. Because plunging into this subject would take us beyond the subject of this study, we will suffice ourselves by examining these two incidents in light of modern psychology, and perhaps in the process throw some new light on these phenomena. So we say:

It appears that these two people strongly believed in the sainthood of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, and it also appears that each of them was not in a normal psychological state when they said what they said.

As for Kamal ibn Hammam, he was known to regularly experience unusual psychological states, in which he would be made absent from his senses. Imām Suyuti said about him in his writings: “Shaikh Kamal ibn Hammam had the states of those who are granted the *Karamāt* (miraculous wonders) and *Kashf* (unveilings of the Unseen). In the beginning he would divest himself of worldly means and the company of people, then the People of the (Ṣūfī) Path told him, ‘Go to the people for they are in need of your knowledge.’ The *Warid* (Divine inspiration) would come upon him, but he would quickly abandon it so he could mix with the people. One of his friends related that he was in his (Kamal’s) house, and said, ‘A *warid* overcame him, and he stood up and grabbed my hand, and dragged me with him until he came to the sea port. He said to the sailors, ‘What are you waiting for?’ They replied, ‘The wind stopped, so we have no choice but to wait.’ He said, ‘It is He (Allāh) Who moves you and stops you,’ and they replied, ‘Yes, that’s true.’ Then, the *Warid* left him, and he said to me, ‘I may have been hard on you,’ to which I replied, ‘Yes, by Allāh, my heart almost stopped because of running behind you.’ Then he told me, ‘Do not blame me, because I didn’t realize what I was doing.’”

It is evident therefore that Hammam was one of those who would experience these psychological states of being which would overwhelm him, during which, in spite of himself, he would become absent from his senses. It is what Jurjani alludes to when he writes: “The *Warid* is whatever comes over the heart of the spiritual meanings from the Unseen without that coming from the slave’s will or volition.” This would come to him and overcome him, so that he would act in an unusual way, such as running in the streets even though he was a well-known scholar, or speaking to the sailors without being cognizant of what he said or did. If this is clear, then we could say that it would not be far off if Kamal ibn Hammam was in one of these states of being when he heard Imām Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh speak from his grave, and we could thus conclude that it was a sort of pseudoperception. But of what sort?

Was it a pseudoperception based on sense data, or some kind of imaginative perception based on extra-sensory data?

It is evident that it was an imaginative perception, which allowed him or caused him to sense certain realities that which were not really existent. In other words, there was no outer stimulus that could be perceived by others as well if they were beside him. This kind of perception is called by modern psychologists “auditory hallucination” which is inspired by auto-suggestion.

What could be said about Kamal’s perception (that it could be auditory hallucination) could also be said about the other student, who saw his Shaykh Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh in the Pilgrimage wherever he looked. This could have been because of his absolute belief in the sainthood of his teacher, and because of his immense love of him and constant invoking of him in his consciousness. Along those lines we could say that his perception was a sort of “visual hallucination,” whose inspiration was his intense feeling for the Shaykh that overcame him.

If the intended goal of these biographers who related these miraculous wonders of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was to prove his high station through them, thinking that these experiences and wonders raise his status, then they have made a mistake, especially with him. For he himself never attributed to these wonders which Allāh grants to His Friends any weight whatsoever, and he was like those ascetics who give no value to worldly goods. He believed that they were veils which could veil one from Allāh, or were stepping-stones to conceited illusions of grandeur. He further-more believed that these wonders could easily

occur with someone whose sainthood is not completed or perfected. Along these lines he writes in *al-Hikam*: “Someone might be endowed with a *Karama* while he has not yet become fully upright and righteous,” and “Not all who are most certainly among the chosen go on to perfect their liberation.” He also explains that the true *Karama* is the breaking of the habits of the self, and not of Nature, and says: “How can the habits of Nature be ruptured for you so that miracles result, while you, for your part, have yet to rupture the bad habits of your self?” And, “Your being on the lookout for the vices hidden within you is better than your being on the lookout for the unseen realities veiled from you.”

Therefore, the *Karamāt*, which are when the habits of nature are broken, do not have any worth with those who are firmly realized in the perfection of Tasawwuf. In this they follow the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, for they paid no attention to the *Karamāt*. As the historian Ibn Khaldun writes: “The Prophetic Companions had an immense share of *Karamāt*, however, they paid no attention or value to them...such as the numerous wonders related of Imām Abu Bakr, Imām ʿUmar, Imām ʿUthmān, and Imām ʿAlī (may Allāh be well pleased with them all).”

Our Shaykh Ibn ʿAtaʾIllah, in spite of what had been related of him of perspicacity and wonders, was a true Ṣūfī who practiced Tasawwuf as deeds and as knowledge. He had a lofty status in the history of Tasawwuf, demonstrated by, but not dependent upon, his *Karamāt*.

## CHAPTER THREE: IBN ʿATĀʾILLĀH'S BOOKS

### 1. Introduction

Biographers of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh mentioned his books, each one of them indicating either the books which he believed to be important or simply those known by him. None of them made a comprehensive classification of his books; not even Hajji Khalifa, whose work cannot be considered exhaustive. A modern researcher wanting to compile a list of all of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's books must therefore compare and combine what has been mentioned by all previous biographers.

Carl Brockelmann, in his book *History of Arabic Literature* (originally in German), undertook some research into this subject. He included in his work all he knew of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's books. He mentioned, with each book, whether it had been published; and if the book was printed, he gave the date of publication. If the book was still a manuscript, he mentioned which library carried it. We have relied greatly on Brockelmann's work in our own research.

There is another reference for the works of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh made by Muḥammad ibn Shānab, who relied on Brockelmann's work in addition to others.

We have compared what has been stated by the biographers of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh with what Brockelmann stated. After a lengthy study, we were able to produce a comprehensive classification with explanation and interpretation. We have also corrected some of Brockelmann's mistakes. We included printed books and manuscripts that he did not mention, giving their numbers and the libraries in which they can be found. In addition, for each book we have indicated its subject; the reason for writing it; its Ṣūfī, literary, and philosophical characteristics; its importance; and its chronological order.

### 2. Comprehensive Classification of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's Books

#### 1) Proverbs or Maxims: *al-Ḥikam*

It seems that the *Ḥikam* was the first major composition of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh. He referred to the proverbs and quoted passages from them in all his other books, including *Illuminated Guidance on the Dropping of Self-Direction*, *Subtleties of Endowments*, *The Bride's Crown*, and *The Sign of Success*.

Hajji Khalifa stated that when Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh completed the *Ḥikam*, he showed it to his Shaykh Abuʾl ʿAbbās al-Mursi, who said to him: "My son, you have included in this text the objectives of the *Ihya* (of Imām al-Ghazālī) and even more." If what Hajji Khalifa said is true, then the *Ḥikam* must have been written before 686 A.H., the year in which al-Mursi died. The *Ḥikam* was therefore one of the early works, written when Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh was still young.

(The *Ḥikam* has been produced in different prints, of which Brockelmann mentions Bulaq Print (1285 A.H.), Cairo Print (1303 A.H.), another Cairo Print (1306 A.H.) with the commentary of ash-Sharqawī, a Cairo Print at the end of the commentary of Ibn ʿAjība (1331 A.H.), and another Cairo Print (1350 A.H.) by Tadamun Akhawī Press. There are several modern translations, the best being by the late Victor Danner of Indiana University.).

#### *Literary Characteristics of the Ḥikam*

The *Ḥikam* of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh is considered to be amongst the most eminent works of Arabic Ṣūfī literature. The *ḥikam* genre has an artistic heritage whose importance has not been fully studied. Through short statements of only a few words each, *ḥikām* bear an immense amount of meaning. Most *ḥikām* are written as an address to the *murid* traveling on the Ṣūfī Path, alerting the student to the rules of the Path he must follow. There is no logical sequence between the various sections, and the author did not classify them by subject. *Hikām* are expressions of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's perceptions, written without any intention of being classified.

The author made an effort to select words which would leave an impact on his listener. Any listener, even a non-Şūfī, would rejoice when listening to the *Hikam*. One can only imagine their great impact on the Sufi. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh paid close attention to similes, metaphors, and literary refinements. Frequently he used rhetorical questions or exclamations. He would also express one meaning through various different statements. However, he rarely used logical progression in the sequences of the proverbs. As an example of his use of metaphors, consider his statements to the *murideen*:

"Bury your existence in the earth of obscurity, for what grows without having first been buried, flowers imperfectly."

"The establishment of sanctity does not necessitate that the attribute of human nature be nonexistent. Sanctity is like the light of the sun in daytime; it appears on the horizon but is not part of it. Sometimes the suns of His Attributes shine in the night of your existence, and sometimes He returns you to your existence. So daytime is not from you to you, but instead, it comes upon you."

"Sometimes He makes you learn in the night of contraction what you have not learned in the radiance of the day of expansion. You do not know which of them is more beneficial to you."

"The branches of disgrace only grow from the seeds of ambitious desire."

"Travel not from creature to creature; otherwise you would be like the ass at the mill. Round and round he goes, his destination the same as his departure point. Rather, go from the creatures to the Creator, and the final end is unto your Lord."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh also used rhyming, but in a manner that did not lessen or corrupt the meanings of his proverbs. Rather, it enriched them and added power and sweetness to them. For example:

His providential care for you is not due to anything coming from you.  
Where were you when He confronted you with His providence  
or met you face-to-face with His care?  
Neither sincerity of deeds nor the existence of spiritual states  
has any reality in His Eternity.  
Instead, only pure bestowing and sublime giving are there.

And also when he writes:

How can your subsequent asking be the cause of His prior giving?  
Far be it for the Divine Decree of the Eternal to be subject to contingent causes."<sup>1</sup>  
Or when he speaks of the methods and truths of gnosis, saying:  
"Meditative reflection is of two types: the reflection of confirmation and faith,  
and the reflection of contemplation and eye-witnessing.  
The first is for the adepts of reflective thought;  
the second is for the adepts of contemplation and insight.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh sometimes uses paronomasia,<sup>2</sup> as when he says:

"It is possible to fulfill some obligations sometimes,  
but it is impossible to fulfill the obligations of every moment,  
for there is no moment wherein Allāh does not hold against you a new obligation  
or a definite matter. So how can you fulfill, in that time, someone else's obligation  
when you have not fulfilled Allāh's?"

<sup>1</sup> Add transliterated Arabic in footnotes to show the rhyming style.

<sup>2</sup> Paronomasia means here a play on words that deliberately exploits confusion between different meanings of words for rhetorical effect.



The meaning of 'moments' in the first statement is the known meaning of the times of religious obligations, but the meaning of 'moments' in the second statement (in the Ṣufi context) is the inward dealings which Allāh brings upon the slave.

He also uses antithesis to strengthen his words. Listen to him when he says, for example:

“Disobedience which bequeaths humiliation and need (to Allāh )  
is better than obedience which bequeaths ostentation and pride.”

Or when he says:

“Be established in your attributes, and  
He will extend to you the support of His Attributes.  
Realize your lowliness and He will support you with His Sublimity.  
Realize your incapacity and He will support you with His Power.  
Realize your weakness, and He will support you with His Might and Force.”

Or when he writes:

“No search pursued by the help of your Lord remains at a standstill,  
but any search pursued by yourself will not be made easy.”

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh also uses the rhetorical question extensively:

How can the heart be illumined  
when the forms of creatures are imprinted on its mirror?  
How can one travel to Allāh while he is chained to his passions?  
How can one think of entering Allāh's Presence,  
while he has not purified his carelessness?  
How can one dare to unfold secrets while he has not given up his folly?

He said of his murideen, with regard to the ethics of friendship, “If you accompany an ignorant one who knows his ignorance and admits it, it is better than accompanying a learned man who is proud of himself. Is there really any knowledge in a learned man who is proud of himself? Is there really any ignorance for an ignorant man who confesses his ignorance?” He said, advising his murideen to resort to Allāh and not to rely on people: “Do not stretch your hand to a man, requesting his support in a matter that Allāh has passed over you; how can one be lifted up if Allāh has put him down? How can one lift up another when he cannot lift up himself?”

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh uses many expressions in his proverbs for a single meaning. He says, for example: “Not everyone who has been supported by *Karama* has been fully established,” meaning that not every Ṣūfī who has been endowed with ‘*Karama*’, has freed himself fully from the dictates of his soul. He expresses the same meaning by saying: “A man might be endowed with *Karama*, while he has not become righteous.” He also expresses it differently by saying to his murideen: “Looking into what has been concealed of your defects is better than looking into the unknown.”

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh rarely used logical sequence in his proverbs, as when he says to his *murideen*:

“The truth is not veiled. It is you who are veiled from beholding Him. If anything veils Him, it is covering Him. But anything that covers, hides and dominates; and He is the only One who is Dominant over His servants.”

These are some of the literary and rhetorical characteristics of his proverbs. We will now turn our attention to their subjects and Sufic characteristics.

### *Subjects of the Hikam:*

Ibn 'Atā'illah put his Ṣūfī thoughts in his *Maxims*. We do not exaggerate when we say that they include his entire doctrine and that all that appear in his other books are but explanations of them.

Some of his *Maxims* deal with Shāria rules with respect to their influence on worshipping travelers. Some of them deal with soul exercises and the stations that are related with them. Some of them revolve around knowledge, its essence, tools, systems, and the ethics of knowers. Some of them include metaphysical viewing in the explanation of existence, its relation to Allāh and man's relations to Allāh. Some of them initiate codes of general behavior which must be regarded by the traveler during his exercise, states, stations, and knowledge, in other words ethics of the path from its beginning to its end.

### *Their Ṣūfī Characteristics:*

The *Maxims* as a Ṣūfī classification are characterized by symbolism. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, in using a symbolic style, was in fact following Ṣūfīs who intentionally on many occasions disguise their tastes by using their own phraseology, and thus their sayings may have two meanings, one derived from the outer meaning of the words and the other deduced by analysis. This meaning can be closed completely for a non-Sūfī. That symbolic meaning, as At-Toussi refers to it, is "an interior meaning stored under its words and is not gained except by its people".

Symbolism with Ṣūfīs also means the amalgamation of many meanings in a few words because we are jealous of them and want to keep them away from deniers or skeptics.

The *Maxims* of As-Sakandāri were symbolic because on one hand they included a lot of the interior meaning stored under normal sayings, which no one except Ṣūfīs could certainly understand, and on the other hand, their few words express a lot of content. Sometimes one maxim may, in spite of its brevity, include a complete Ṣūfī doctrine.

An example of *Maxims* of few words that mean a lot and which need deep insightful thought to be understood is his saying to his mureed:

1. "He got you to behold before he got you to attest, so creations attested His Deity, and hearts were ascertained with His Oneness."
2. And his saying: "Not everyone who has been chosen has been ascertained fully."
3. And his saying: "The universe is established by Him and established in His Oneness." The first statement refers to the previous witnessing of the human soul of the Oneness of Allāh in another world, i.e. the world of light particles, before it ascended to the body and that man is required in this world to attest to Allāh's Oneness. Knowledge of Allāh ﷻ, though a prerequisite for the outer world, is in fact intuitive in origin.

The second statement refers to the basis on which the soul exercise stands, i.e. the following of Allāh's attributes through witnessing Him in as much as humanly possible because a Ṣūfī will only get out of his mean qualities by witnessing the attributes of Allāh ﷻ.

As for the third statement, it refers to a doctrine in interpreting existence to the effect that the universe is created by Allāh ﷻ, consequently creations do not really exist by themselves vis-a-vis the Oneness of Allāh, which is the real existence.

When I first got engaged in this thesis, I could not understand many of the *Maxims*. Then when I read other books by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and returned to the *Maxims*, their real meaning started gradually to appear for me.

It seems Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh meant that his *Maxims* were addressed only for the few. It also seems that he did not mean to express their Ṣūfī realities explicitly. He believed, like other Ṣūfīs, that explicit expression of these realities is not a quality of an ascertained Ṣūfī, because revealing them would make them cheap and common. He refers to this in one of the *Maxims* by saying to his mureed: “He that you see answering every question expressing everything he saw and saying all that he knows is proving his ignorance.”

Al-Rondi tells us that when he started to express the *Maxims* of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, he was afraid because their words were symbolic. He said: “We are unable to comprehensibly gather all that the book includes because the sayings of walis (*awliyyaa*) and knowers by Allāh are full of hidden secrets and concealed wisdom that are only described to them. It is only by taking from them that one can know of them. In these words which we write, we do not pretend that we aim to explain the sayings of the author nor that what we say is the reality of his doctrine. If we pretended so, that would be impossible.”

There is another characteristic of his *Maxims*. They deal with faith and they are in accordance with the Kitab (Qurʾān) and Sunnah. They do not include any imaginary or deniable statements. Ibn Ajiba, one of interpreters of the *Hikam*, refers to the system which its author followed by saying: “...the system used in them is a system which singularizes Allāh, which cannot be accused by anyone...”

Ibn Mughayzel al Shādhīyāh sees that the *Maxims* do not include anything like pantheism or other degenerate doctrines. He says: “Had there been a single particle of a pantheism or deviation in them, As-Subki would have never read them...”

### ***Their Ṣūfī Merits:***

The *Maxims* have great Ṣūfī merits. They summarize Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh’s Ṣūfī doctrine and they are considered like a constitution for travelers on the Shādhīyāh path. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh was known among his companions by his *Maxims*. They called him ‘the owner of hikām’.

The *Maxims* became famous among those who came after Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh in Egypt and other Islamic countries, especially in countries of the Maghrib (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya) and in Andalusia, where the *Hikam* was studied, and many scholars managed to interpret them.

Ibn Ajiba stated, with regard to their Ṣūfī worth, that Shaykh Al-Arabi (a later Maghribi Shādhīyāh) heard a faqih called Al-Banani saying, “The *Hikam* of Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh are almost like revelation. If salāt were correct without the Qurʾān, it would be correct by the *Hikam*.”

The *Hikam* was not only famous among Ṣūfīs who came after Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, but they also found their way to professors at Al-Azhar. Many Egyptian scholars gave lessons in them; among them was Shaykh Al-Madabghī who died in 1170H, Shaykh Al-Adawī who died in 1189H, Shaykh Mohammed Ibn Barri who died in 1193H, Shaykh Al-Sharqawī who died in 1227H, Shaykh Al-Sharnoubi and others.

Ibn Zaki Mubaarak stated that the *Hikam* were studied in Al-Azhar in this century (twentieth) by great professors like Shaykh Mohammed Bakheit (Mufti of Egypt) who used to teach them after Asr prayers each day in Ramaḍān in Al-Hussein mosque. He said he had himself taken some of these lessons and that he was highly impressed and illuminated by their meaning.

Nowadays, the *Maxims* are still taught in some Ṣūfī gatherings. That shows that the *Hikam* is undeniably more than a vivid relic, and still teaches in spite of the lapse of centuries.

The *Maxims* were variously interpreted and explained in different times and different ages and different languages and they were described, as Hajji Khalifa said, by those whose taste was refined due to their artistic meaning. There is probably no other Ṣūfī exposition that has been equally explained.

Professor A.J. Arberry is of the opinion that the *Maxims* of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh were unusually accepted and that is manifested by the large number of interpretations which were written on them. He describes them as a small attractive and eloquent book.

The Spanish orientalist Miguel Asin Palacios noted the importance of the *Maxims* and their explanations by Al-Rondi in a thesis which he wrote about the interpreter and the possibility of his and the Shādhḍhuli influence on the views of the Christian San Juan De La Cruz of Spain.

The English Orientalist A.J. Arberry translated a few of its statements. We give below a list of the interpretations of the *Maxims* (as available to us) chronologically classified.

### ***Interpretations of His Maxims:***

1. The interpretation of Al-Rondi who died in 792H (1389 AD). He was from Andalusia. His interpretation was mentioned by Hajji Kḥalifa and also by Brockelmann. He said, it was one of the school Ṣufibooks in Zaitouna mosque in Tunisia. It was published many times; Brockelmann mentions Boulak 1285H, Cairo 1297H, and Cairo 1306H. On their margin there is an interpretation by Shaykh Al-Sharqawi. We add to these dates of prints, Boulak 1287H, 1299H, and Cairo 1304H, 1310H, 1313H, and 1317H.

2. An interpretation by Al-Rondi's son, which was mentioned by Hajji Kḥalifa and was described as a small mixed interpretation.

3. An interpretation by Shaykh Zarrouq, who died in 899H. It was mentioned by Hajji Kḥalifa and Brockelmann. Brockelmann mentioned its Cairo prints 1288H and 1289H. Hajji Kḥalifa said that Shaykh Zarrouq mentioned in some of his interpretations that he studied the *Maxims* fifteen times and that he wrote by hand each time a different interpretation of them. We have found the written copies of Shaykh Zarrouq's interpretation in the library of Al-Azhar. It's said that these were his seventeenth interpretation of them. Their numbers are (106) 6150 and (1314) 44809. It is also said that Shaykh Zarrouq wrote over thirty interpretations of the *Maxims*.

4. The interpretation of Safiuddin Abil Mawahib Al-Shādhḍhuli, which was referred to by his student Al-Axora'i, Hajji Kḥlifa and Brockelmann. We were lucky to find a written copy of it in the Garret collection under the number 1582 in Princeton's University Library, USA.

5. The interpretation of Al-Axora'i, which Hajji Kḥalifa mentioned; its author wrote in Mecca in 903H (1497 AD). Brockelmann mentioned two written prints of it, one in the Berlin Library under the number 869415, and the other in the Gotha Library under the number 890.

6. The interpretation of Al-Hanbali, who died in 971H. It was mentioned by Hajji Kḥalifa, but not by Brockelmann.

7. The interpretation of al-Muttaqi al Hindi, who died in 977H (1569 AD). Brockelmann mentioned a written copy of it in the Berlin Library under the number 8696.

8. The interpretation of Shaykh Al-Manawi, who died in 1091H (1622 AD). It was mentioned by Hajji Kḥalifa and Brockelmann said there was a written copy of it in the Berlin Library under the number 8697/8, another copy in the Paris Library under the number 5324, and a third copy in the Egyptian National Library (no. 200 Ṣufism). We add two written copies in Al-Azhar Library, no (50)3175, and (753) 28638.

9. The interpretation of As- Siddiqui, who died in 1033H (1623 AD). There is a written copy of it in the Egyptian National Library under the number 4128 Ṣufism.

10. An interpretation by an anonymous author written in 1055H. The written copy of it is in the Egyptian National Library under the number 41490.



11. The interpretation of Shaykh Ibn Zikri, who died 1144H. Brockelmann mentioned a copy of it in the Paris Library under the number 1351, one in the Egyptian National Library, no. 230 Šūfism, another copy, no. 4139 Šūfism, and a third copy in Al-Azhar Library, no. (756) 28641.

12. The interpretation of Al Madani, who wrote it in Al-Madina in the year 1145H (1732 AD). Brockelmann mentioned a copy of it in the Algerian Library, no 3523.

13. The interpretation of Al-Madabghī who died in 1170H. It is never mentioned by Brockelmann or by others. There is a copy of it in Al-Azhar Library, no. (752) 28637.

14. The interpretation of Shaykh Al-Bayyumi, who died in 1183H. It is mentioned by Al-Jabarti and Brockelmann. There is a copy of it in the Egyptian National Library under the number 206 Šūfism.

15. The interpretation of Shaykh Ibn Barri Al-Adawi Al-Māliki, who died in 1193H. He wrote it following the interpretation of his own Shaykh (‘Alī Al-Adawi who died in 1189H). He finished it on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān 1182H. It was neither mentioned by Brockelmann nor by anyone else. There is a copy of it in the Egyptian National Library under the number 115 Šūfism.

16. The interpretation of Shaykh Ibn Karran. It was mentioned by Brockelmann who said there are two copies of it, one in Fez and the other in Rabbat.

17. The interpretation of Al-Yamani, mentioned by Brockelmann.

18. The interpretation of Al-Hindi. Brockelmann mentioned a copy of it available in the Rampour Library no. 1370354.

19. The interpretation of Al-Wazīri. Brockelmann mentioned a copy of it in the Shaheed ‘Alī Library under the number 1323.

20. The interpretation of Ibn Ajiba Al-Fassi. It was neither mentioned by Brockelmann nor by Hajji Kḥalifa. It was started by its author in the first month of the year 1211H, and completed the same year. It is printed in Cairo, the year 1324H and 1331H.

21. The interpretation of Shaykh Al-Sharqawi, who died in 1227H. It was mentioned by Al-Jabarti. It was frequently printed on the margin of Al-Rondī’s interpretation.

22. The interpretation of Shaykh Al-Sharnoubi. It was mentioned by Brockelmann. Sarkis mentioned in his dictionary that it was printed the year 1304H.

23. The interpretation of Maher in Turkish. It was mentioned by Brockelmann and printed in Istanbul in 1323H.

24. An interpretation in Malaysian by an anonymous writer printed in Mecca. Snouck Hergronie mentioned it in his book ‘Mecca’ part 2, page 387 as Brockelmann stated.

24. An excellent translation by ‘Abdu-l-Jabbār (Victor) Danner published in English in 1973 by E.J.Brill in the Netherlands and in other editions as well.

### *The Maxims in Poetry:*

As many have concerned themselves with the explanation of the Maxims, many others have concerned themselves with composing them in poetry. The following are what we have ourselves seen of them:

1. A composition by Kamal Addin Ibn ‘Alī Sherif, who died in 906H. Brockelmann mentioned a copy of it in the Berlin Library under the number 8699.

2. A composition by Adul Karim Mohammed Ibn Arabi mentioned by Brockelmann under the number 1321 in the Fez Library.

3. A composition by Ibrahim Ibn Malik. Brockelmann mentioned two copies of them, one in Algeria Library under the number 2429, and the other in the Egyptian National Library, but we could not trace it.

4. A composition by 'Alī Shihab Addin Ibn Moḥammed Ibn Saaduddin, mentioned by Brockelmann under the number 1356258 in the Rampour Library.

5. A composition by °Abdullāh Ibn 'Alī Al-Māliki. It was neither mentioned by Brockelmann nor anyone else. There is a hand written copy of it in the Egyptian National Library under the number 219 Ṣūfism.

### ***The Classification of His Maxims:***

Another Ṣūfi classified the Maxims. He was Ala'uddin 'Alī Ibn Husam-uddin Abdul Malik Ibn Kadi Khan, known as Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, who died in 977H. There are several copies of his classification of the Maxims in Al-Azhar Library.

### ***Commentary:***

As we have seen, the *Maxims* have been numerous explained from the eighth century of Hijra up to the present time. They found their way from Egypt to other Islamic countries, e.g. Spain, the Maghrib countries, the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey, India, and Malaysia. They consequently became a living Ṣūfi heritage.

No other books by Ibn °Aṭā'illāh received such attention, in spite of their high worth. His other books are important because they explain the symbolic indications of the *Maxims*. All interpreters of the *Maxims* relied on them greatly, and without those books, they would not be able to understand the *Maxims* or disclose their inner objectives.

### **2) Ibn Ata'illa's Supplication:**

He has a Ṣūfī supplication which is considered one of the best pieces of his Ṣūfī literature. It is a petition to Allāh, and most probably he composed it simultaneously with the *Maxims* because its language is similar to theirs. We relate here some paragraphs of it to prove the worth of Ibn °Aṭā'illāh as a writer who wonderfully expresses his emotions and could reveal his feelings in a way that attracts his listeners and conveys to them his piety and devotion.

Ibn °Aṭā'illāh starts by saying:

“My Allāh, I am poor in my wealth, how can I not be poor in my poverty? My Allāh, I am ignorant in my knowledge, how can I not be ignorant in my ignorance? My Allāh, the diversity of your planning and the suddenness of your destiny stopped your knowing slaves from leaning on any grant but not to despair in calamity. My Allāh, I am worth my meanness, and You are worth Your generosity.”

He then goes on in his supplication expressing his feelings and states. He speaks about his knowledge of Allāh by faith and not by proof:

“My Allāh, how can anything prove Your existence while it is in its very existence depending on You? Can anything beyond You be more obvious than You as to show up? When are You absent, so that a proof of You is needed to prove You? When have You been far away so that creations can lead to You?”

His rhetorical talent then shows up in words which until now people reflect on. He says:

“My Allāh, my humiliation is so obvious to you.

My state is known to you.  
 By You I ask You to reach to You and by You I prove You.  
 Please guide me by Your light to You  
 and place me by the righteous of slavehood in front of You.”

He then explains his dropping of self-direction with Allāh in a language that bears the devotion of a Ṣūfī:

“My Allāh, please abandon me with Your planning from my planning  
 and by Your choice for me from my own choice.  
 Please place me in the station of need to you...  
 My Allāh, by You I ask You for victory, please give me victory.  
 On You I rely, do not abandon me. I ask You, do not send me away. In Your bounty I wish, do not  
 deprive me. To Your presence I trust,  
 do not let me be distant.  
 By Your gate I stand, do not dismiss me.”

He then expresses feelings of knowledge, love, and proximity to Allāh in a language that in my view was never surpassed by any Ṣūfī. Reading his petition to Allāh:

You have illuminated the hearts of Your walis as they knew and singularized You.  
 You have driven away the otherness from the hearts of Your lovers, so they did not love but You  
 and never want of others. You delighted them when creation did not look to them. You guided  
 them until everything became clear to them.  
 What does he find who had missed You,  
 and what has he missed who had found You?

He goes on in this manner until the end of his supplication, expressing his Ṣūfī states sincerely and beautifully. This supplication had and still holds a high esteem for Shādhḍulis. They reflect on it late at night in petition and worship.

Interpretation for his *Maxims* also explained this supplication, and it was practiced numerous after the end of the *Maxims* and their interpretations, also after the end of *Taj Al-Aruss*. Brockelmann was wrong when he stated that it was only written and not permitted.

### 3) *Advice to His Companions in Alexandria: Waṣiya ila-l Ikwān bi-l Iskandariyah*

It is advice which Ibn ʿAṭāʾillāh sent to his companions and mureeds in Alexandria in the early days of the month of Rabiʾ Al-Awwal (third month) of the year 694H. He explained to them heavenly attention, love, gratitude, *Tawba*, seclusion, litanies, etc.... It starts as follows:

“In the name of Allāh, most Merciful, most Compassionate, peace of Allāh, grace and benediction on my loving friends and beloved sons. May Allāh protect them, guide and safeguard them.... Know, Allāh bless you, that heavenly attention, though unknown, has a sign that reveals it and indications that lead to it....”

Brockelmann stated that that advice was handwritten but it is not so. It was printed at the end of *Subtleties of Endowment* in the year 1322H.

#### 4) Illuminating Guidance on the Dropping of Self-Direction: *at-Tanwīr fī Isqāt it-Tadbīr*

Because Ibn 'Atā'illāh's entire doctrine revolved on one axis, being man's dropping of his own self-direction for the direction of Allāh and being content with Allāh's choice for him, he singled out a special book to explain his doctrine and prove it with all sorts of proofs. Brockelmann described the book "Illumination" as revolving around the idea of full resort to Allāh. Ibn 'Atā'illāh said in this respect:

"...know my brother, may Allāh make you of His lovers and enrich you with his proximity, get you to drink from the drink of his beloved, safeguard you with his continuous nearness to you from His aloofness... that he who wants to reach to Allāh, should enter to Him from His gate and reach Him by the means He set for that. The first thing he should do is to purify himself from self-planning and contesting with fate. I have written this book to show that, and I called it: "Illuminating Guidance on the Dropping of Self-Direction" so that its title should express its subject and its words should tally with its meaning...."

The first chapter includes proofs for His doctrine from the Kitāb and Sunnah, the reasons for dropping self-direction, undesirable self-direction, desirable self-direction etc.... The second chapter is an application of his doctrine in the field of livelihood and learning and earning a living. He quotes several āyāt (āyāt:verses) from the Qur'ān, and prophetic ḥadīth in support of his views. He also gives examples of material matters to support them. He wrote it in a preaching language and filled it with similes and metaphors that reveal his rhetorical talent. Listen to him saying, in urging his murid to drop self-direction:

"The example of a slave with Allāh is like a tree that has been planted by someone who wanted its growth and fruit. The tree knew, if it has knowledge, or in other words our knowledge is that that man would never plant it and deprive it of water. How could he do that, when he is keen to have its fruit? In the same way, you, slave, are the tree of Allāh. He planted you and waters you every moment. He gives you nutrition. Do not accuse Him of planting the tree of your existence and then depriving you of water after planting you. He is not forgetful nor is he inadvertent."

Also listen to him urging his murid to do good deeds for his hereafter and to forsake depression emanating from getting involved or obsessed by livelihood:

"The one that is obsessed by his livelihood, in negligent avoidance of his hereafter, is like a man that has been attacked by a lion which is about to kill him. At that moment, a fly falls on him. He becomes busy in driving away the fly and leaves the lion. That is an ignorant slave. Had he been wise, he would have got himself involved in escaping from the lion first...."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh ends his first book by a chapter in which he summarizes his doctrine in the form of a petition to Allāh which is based on the realities of His own planning and sufficing His slaves. It also reveals his rhetorical talent. He says:

"Oh slave. I have been for you by my own planning before you were for yourself.  
I have cared for you before you existed.  
Now I am still caring for you.... Oh slave, I am still singular in the creation and shaping. I am  
singular in the judgment and direction.  
You have not participated with Me in My creating and shaping so do not participate with Me in My  
judgment and direction....  
Oh slave, look to your relation to My universe;  
you will find that you are vanishing in the annihilated.  
What do you think of Who does not vanish...."



Oh slave, as you have surrendered to Me  
in creating My land and sky all by Myself alone,  
surrender your existence to Me.  
You are Mine. Do not plan with Me because you are with me."

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh mentioned that he started writing it in Mecca and completed it in Damascus in the year 695H (1296 AD). Brockelman mentioned its' prints being "Cairo 1281H, 1290H, 1300H, 1313H, and 1323H." We add: Cairo 1301H, 1321H, 1345H, and 1350H. There are two new translations in the US, one from Fons Vitae and one from an-Noor Foundation (used above).

**5) *Subtleties of Endowments in the Merits of Shaykh Abu-l-'Abbās Al-Mursi and his Shaykh Abu-l-Ḥassan ash-Shādhḍhuli: Laṭā'if al-Minan:***

He wrote this book after his book *Illumination*, more precisely, he wrote it in the year 698H, as we have deduced from some of its statements, which show that it was written after the death of the Sultan Lajien. He wrote it when he found that his duty was to preserve for those who came after him the basis of the Shādhḍhuli tariqa, its ethics, and the history of its Shaykhs (shuyukh). He wrote a biography for his Shaykh Al-Mursi and his Grand Shaykh Abu-l-Ḥassan Al-Shādhḍhuli. He stated their merits, litanies, words, and advice. He was the first to do that. He wrote about this, saying: "I meant the book to include some of the merits of our Shaykh, the Qutb of knowers, the flag of the dedicated, the master of Ṣufism, the guide of travelers...he who has reached to Allāh and who unites others to him, Shihab-uddin Abu-l-'Abbās Ahmed bin Omar Al-Ansari Al-Mursi... I also mention his Shaykh from whom he took, the stories that are related to him and which I have heard myself from him, his wonder, knowledge, secrets, and his dealings with Allāh... I do not know of any of our Shaykh's friends who has classified his words, stated its secrets, knowledge, and wonders. All that urged me to write this book."

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, however, did not only include what he has mentioned above, but he also added some of his own perceptions in Ṣufism. He wrote an introduction about the significance of prophethood, walihood, and other Ṣufi subjects such as annihilation, existence, knowledge, interpretation of existence, and heavenly love, and followed it by a chapter on wonders and his doctrine on asceticism. In it also, he stated some stories about his own Ṣufi life.

All those who wrote biographies for ash-Shādhḍhuli relied on the book of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, therefore it has the merit of being the pioneer in commemorating the heritage of the Shādhḍhuli Tariqa.

Among all books by Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, this one is singled out by being systematically classified according to a scientific order.

He finished this book by a short conclusion. Brockelmann mentioned the following prints of this book: Tunis 1304H. Cairo 1321H. We add: Cairo 1322H, Cairo 1357H (1938 AD).

**6) *The Bride's Crown including the Soul's Refinement: Tāj ul-Arūs il-Ḥāwi li Tahdhīb in-Nufūs***

ʿAtāʾIllāh wrote this book after the *Illumination* and *Subtleties of Endowments*. It is based on them. As Ibn Ajiba says: *the Bride's Crown* included Ṣufi preaching by which its author urges his mureeds to stick to Shari'a and Ṣufi ethics.

It is clear he meant the common people by this book and not the Sufis only. Listen to him saying in its introduction:

“You slave. Ask for repentance from Allāh at all times.  
 Allāh has ordered you to do that by saying: “Repent to Allāh, all of you believers,  
 so that you may win.”  
 Allāh also said: “Allāh loves those who repent and loves those who purify themselves.”  
 The Prophet said: “My heart sometimes rusts and I ‘astaghfir Allāh’  
 seventy times a day.”

If you want Tawba, you should not stop meditating on what you have done all your day.  
 If you find obedience, thank Allāh for it.  
 If you find disobedience, blame yourself, resort to Allāh and repent.”

He then goes on, giving examples sometimes, as when he says:

“...disobedience is like fire. Darkened is its smoke.  
 He that had fire in his house for seventy years, would not his house become black?!  
 Similarly, the heart darkens by folly.  
 It is only cleaned by *tawba*.... A slave is like an iron pot.  
 When fire is kindled under it, it become black,  
 but if you go on washing it, it will be clean.  
 If you leave it, cook in it time after time, black will be a part of it until it is broken.  
 Washing will not help it.  
*Tawba* washes the darkness of the heart.  
 Deeds will then show up with the smell of being accepted.”

It is clear that Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh meant the commoners only by his preaching. This book has other titles....

Brockelmann was wrong when he considered that the book entitled *The Masterpiece of Sufism* was different from the *Bride’s Crown*, because it seems he concerned himself only with the title and did not read the book.

He was wrong once again when he considered that a written copy found in the Berlin Library under the number 3217 was another book and not the *Bride’s Crown*. Al-Azhar Library has another copy.

That leads to the deduction that Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh did not give a title of his preachings included in the *Bride’s Crown*. It seemed some of his mureeds classified them each on his own and consequently they were given different titles. The *Bride’s Crown* was printed several times under this singular name.

#### 7) *The Sole Goal in Knowledge of the Singular Name:* *al-Qaṣd ul-Mujarrad fī Ma‘rifat il-Ism il-Mufrad*

This book is a message written by Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh to cover his doctrines in theologies. They revolve around Allāh’s Essence, Attributes, Names, Acts, the way to know Him, etc.

In this epistle, the philosophical and theological brilliance of Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh manifests clearly, showing in his usage of the technical vocabulary of the philosophers and theologians concerning eternity and contingency, categories of existence, and what relates to the accidents, such as movements, stillness, change, etc. He also uses ideas about what is necessary and what is possible to justify his own Sufi views.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh’s experience in Ashaari doctrine shows up clearly when he speaks about the ‘being’ and its attributes. He says, for example:

“Know that all attributes of Allāh are all attributes of deity and qualities of it.  
This is not to say that they are He or that He is them....”

The “Sole Goal” does not include mental subjects only, but it also includes Ṣufi tastes related to ethics, as when the author speaks of trying to follow Allāh’s attributes in one’s life, and the what of that. It also includes other tastes related to knowledge, as when he speaks of knowledge of Allāh and its ways, the meaning of ‘beholding’ and its doctrines and other Ṣufi subjects in this connection.

This message has been mentioned by both Ibn Ajiba and Hajj Moḥammed Al-Kawhan under the title: *The Pure Saying in the Knowledge of the Singular Name*.

It was printed in Egypt in the year 1348H (1930 AD).

#### 8) *The Key to Success and the Lamp of Spirits: Miftāh al-Falāh wa Miṣbāh al-Arwāḥ*

This work is considered among the most important of Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh’s books, as it includes rules for practical Ṣufi exercises, e.g. dhikr, seclusion, isolation, etc. It is written in a scientific way and according to a definite system. It falls into two parts: the first includes an introduction and basics.

In the introduction, he speaks about the essence of dhikr (supplication), his views about the human soul, its grades, and the impact of supplication on it.

In the first part, he gives proofs for the value of Ṣufi supplication from the Kitāb and Sunnah. He then deals with the practical value of supplication, what to choose of it, the ascent of the traveler in it. Then comes a chapter about Ṣufi seclusion and what is related to it.

The second part gives an explanation of the litanies. It includes linguistic, philosophical, and basic research into the meaning of “there is no God but Allāh”. It includes a chapter which deals logically with the proofs of Allāh’s singularity. After that it includes Ṣufi subjects related to supplication by “there is no God but Allāh”, and other supplications.

The conclusion includes times of supplication and in incantation (*ar-Ruqa*) and what is connected with it. Here, Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh reveals his views about singularity, knowledge, states of travelers to Allāh, and what they should impose on themselves from ethical points of view, etc.

His book’s stories show how deep he was in linguistic, logical, and philosophical subjects. On the one hand they show how scientific and logical he was in dealing with these subjects, and on the other hand, show a picture of him as a faqih and a linguist. His philosophical experience shows up clearly when he mentions proofs of philosophies of the singularity of Allāh in some detail. He says, for example:

“If we suppose that there are two things that exist due to self-existence,  
and that each of them is sharing the other in existence but different from it,  
and that each of them is composed of the existences that the other shares him in,  
and the difference which made him different from the other.  
If each of them needs all its parts, which are not him,  
and each composition needs its components,  
to say that self-existence can be more than one is impossible.”

This book has a different title: *The Key to Success in Remembrance of Allāh Al-Karīm Al-Fattāh*, as mentioned by Hajji Kḥalifa.

Brockelmann stated that it has been printed on the margin of *Subtleties of Endowment*, Cairo 1321H, and we add to it a print by Shaykh Ahmed Matar in Cairo, the date is unknown, and a print by Dar Al-Sa’aada 1322H, and AL-Malijia 1322H.

9) *The Sign of Concord in the Ethics of the Tariq: 'Ūnwān at-Tawfīq fī Ādāb at-Tariq*

This classification is an explanation of a poem in the ethics of companionship by Shaykh Abu Madyan Al-Gawth Al-Tilmisāni, who died in 594H. He was one of the most eminent Sufis of Maghreb. The poem starts:

“No pleasure in living except in accompanying Sufis.  
They are the sultans, the masters and the princes.”

This explanation is mentioned by Hajj Al-Kawhan. It was printed in Cairo in 1353H. It is composed of twenty-one lines. Ibn Ata'illāh explained it in his rhetorical style. He shows its Ṣufi meanings in accompanying others and in conduct.

10) *A Message on Allāh's Saying: "When those believe in Our revelations come to you, say peace be on you..." : Risālah fī Qawlihi Ta'āla...*

It is not a short message in which Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh speaks about the meaning of faith, grades of people in it, Allāh's Being, His attributes, etc. There is a written copy of it in the Egyptian National Library under the number 81, Ṣufism. It was not mentioned by translators, nor by Hajji Kḥalifa, nor by Brockelmann.

11) *Poems: Qaṣā'id*

Brockelmann stated that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh had a collection of poems and he mentioned a hand-written copy of them in the Berlin Library, number 7846. When we referred to the index of the Arabic manuscripts in the Berlin Library, we found these poems.

One starts by:

“By Allāh, no life has ever been happy  
except by proximity of the beloved.”

Another poem starts:

“My desire from You is to forget my desire  
because I really want to reach to harmony.”

We found the first poem printed at the end of *Subtleties of Endowments*. It is composed of sixty-two lines and we found the other poem in *Illumination* and it's lines are twenty-two.

12) *The Ascent to the Eternal Shrine: al-Marqā ila-l Quds il Abqā*

This classification was mentioned by Al-Suyyouti. Moḥammed Ibn Shenab also mentioned it, but Brockelmann did not. We have not traced it yet.

13) *A Summary of the Refinement of Students by Barādhi'ī: Mukhtaṣar Tahdhīb al-Mudawwana lil-Barādhi'*

Al-Suyyouti mentioned this book and he said it was on Fiqh. It is called *Abridgement of 'summary of the Mudawwana'* in Maliki fiqh. Mohammed Ibn Shenab also mentioned it, but it was not mentioned by Brockelmann, and we have not yet traced it.

Brockelmann mentioned it under this title and stated there is a manuscript of it in the British Museum, no.2372. Reerring to the index of Arabic manuscripts there, we found *Religious Precepts and Maxims*. It starts as follows: “The Shaykh and Imām, Taajuddin Ahmed Bin Al-Shaykh and Imām and the scholar Fakḥruddin AbuBakr Moḥammed, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh Al-Iskandāri, a wise man is known by three things: by restraining himself from his passion, reigning it in anger...etc.”



**15) Sermons: *Mawā'idh***

Mentioned by Brockelmann, there is a hand-written copy of one in the Paris Library, no. 1299.

**16) The Litany of Rescue: *Ḥizb un-Najāt***

Mentioned by Brockelmann, there is a manuscript of it in the Rabat Library, no. (9) – 306.

**17) A Message in Sufism: *Risālah fī't Taṣawwuf***

Mentioned by Brockelmann, there is a manuscript of it in the Asif Library, no. 1,368,105.

**18) A Warning in the Path of Sufis: *Tanbīh fī Tarīq il-Qawm***

Mentioned by Brockelmann, there is a hand-written copy of it in Zaitouna Library in Tunis, no. 111 168, 1882e.

**19) A Message in Behavior: *Risālah fī's Sulūk***

Mentioned by Brockelmann. There is a hand-written copy of it in the Rampour Library, no. 214 Sufism, 2150 Sufism, 1598 and Sufism.

**20) Litany of Light and Complete Happiness: *Ḥizb un-Nūr wa Tamām is-Surūr***

Mentioned by Brockelmann, and there is a hand-written copy of it in the Egyptian National Library under no. 214, 2150, 1598 Sufism.

**21) Petition: *Du'ā'***

There is a hand written-copy of it in the Egyptian National Library among a Sufi collection, no. 1632 Sufism.

**22) A Companion's Masterpiece in Explaining Advice of Brothers: *Tuḥfat ul-Khillān fī Sharḥ Naṣiḥat il-Ikhwān***

There was a hand-written copy of this classification in the Egyptian National Library, no. 1401 Sufism, and it is now considered missing. We could not trace any other copy.

### 3- Commentary:

We see from the above that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh left a large number of books which are distinguished from one another in their subjects and the objectives for which they were written. They also differ in volume and style. They have gained unusual attention and a wide circulation in many Islamic countries ever since the seventh century Hijra.

These books reflect clearly the knowledge of their author. Some of them reflect his image as a writer who has a rhetorical style. Some reflect his image as a Sufi of certain taste who examines the smallest psychological states in the traveling to Allāh. Some reflect his image as a linguist and a faqīh who is conversant with logic and philosophy. Some reflect his image as a preacher who guides people to the Path of Allāh in a strong and penetrating language.

Thus Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's classifications are a clear sign of their author's comprehensive knowledge of various components.

We can classify his work into three groups, each having its own characteristics with regard to style and way of writing.

1 – Some of them are in the form of symbolic statements of few words that mean a lot and they cannot be easily disclosed, e.g. *Hikam*.

2 – Some of them are messages for certain purposes, systematically classified, e.g. *Subtleties of Endowments*, *The Pure Intention in Knowing the Singular*, and *The Key of Concord*.

3 – Some of them are messages with a preaching purpose written in an oratorical style, e.g. *The Bride's Crown*, *Illumination*, and the rest of what he has written as advice to his companions and friends.

#### 4- Conclusion:

We wish to conclude this investigation into the life, times and work of Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh with a supplication from *Illuminating Guidance on the Dropping of Self Direction*:

O Allāh! You have planned everything before the existence of everything,  
and we have come to know  
that there will never come to be anything except what You will,  
and this knowledge will not be of benefit to us  
unless You will the (benefit).  
So will Your good for us,  
and elevate our station by Your grace.  
Seek us with Your providential care,  
and surround us with Your protection,  
and clothe us with the raiment of the people of Your friendship,  
and cause us to enter into the existence of Your safekeeping,  
for You are capable of everything!





*Maqām of Sidi 'Abū-l-'Abbas al Mursi*

## DIVISION TWO: Ibn 'Ata'illāh's Doctrine

- 1) THE DROPPING OF SELF-DIRECTION (TADBĪR)
- 2) THE HUMAN SOUL (NAFS)
- 3) STRUGGLE AGAINST THE SOUL (NAFS)
- 4) THE SOUL (NAFS) AND ETHICS OF BEHAVIOR
- 5) THE SOUL (NAFS) BETWEEN STATIONS AND STATES
- 6) GNOSIS (MA'RIFAH)
- 7) BEHOLDING THE DIVINE ONENESS IN EXISTENCE

### CHAPTER ONE: THE DROPPING OF SELF-DIRECTION (TADBĪR)

We shall divide this vast topic into four parts:

1. The main idea of his doctrine
2. The negation of human will and faith in fate
3. The meaning of self direction and dropping it
4. Dropping self direction in livelihood

“In every breath of yours, you have an obligation for Him which He has predestined.”

“Relieve yourself from self direction. What others do for you, do not do it yourself.”

“Your toil in what had been insured for you and your negligence in what is required from you is a proof that your insight is veiled.”

“He knew that slaves look for an exposure of the secret of His attention, as He said: ‘He selects whom He wishes with His Mercy’. He also knew that if He left them as such, they would neglect deeds, in dependence on predestination, so He said, ‘The mercy of Allāh ﷻ is near to those who do good.’”

#### 1. The main idea of his doctrine:

From the beginning, Ibn Atā'illāh's main theme was that man had no will in relation to the Will of Allāh ﷻ. Who rules the whole universe including man.

This theme might have been adopted by other Ṣūfīs, but Ibn Atā'illāh's uniqueness was apparent in applying it and in the important role it plays in his entire Ṣūfī philosophy and in the various results based on it. We shall not be far from the truth, when we say that our Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh has placed the idea of dropping self direction behind every other Ṣūfī concept and that it is the firm foundation of his entire Ṣūfī doctrine.

According to our Shaykh, the beginning traveler who strives against his self should fully drop his self-direction and will. He should not be proud of his deeds, obedience or jihad and should not relate them to his own will, because these deeds and obedience are caused by the support of Allāh ﷻ. Jihad of the self can be considered a negative effort made by the traveler, because it does not necessarily lead to Allāh ﷻ. We do not consequently see him stressing its utmost importance in behavior, in the way many other Ṣūfīs do. He, on the contrary, leaves a space for attraction, which is a Ṣūfī state in which a Ṣūfī reaches to the knowledge of the pure attention of Allāh ﷻ, without the labor of jihad on the tail of ascent to stations and states of the path.



All ethics of conduct applied by the traveler in his self jihad revolve, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh believes, on one pole, i.e. the complete dropping of self direction and will by the traveler due to what Allāh ﷻ had predestined for him, because Allāh's will, ﷻ, entirely covers every minute detail of his life. There is consequently no room for him to choose for himself. We therefore find that all ethics of conduct with him, e.g. deprivation, applying means of having, petition, granting, interest, etc, lead the traveler to one result, which is the dropping of self direction and will with Allāh ﷻ.

All the states and stations that meet the traveler in his self jihad, as mentioned by our Shaykh Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, are based on also dropping self direction. So *tawba*, abstinence, patience, gratitude, fear, hope, reliance on Allāh u, contentment, and love, which are the stations of the road to Allāh ﷻ, will not be correct, in his view, unless the traveler is ascertained with the dropping of his self direction. What is said about stations can be said about states, e.g. joy, depression, merriment, annihilation, existence, are not of the traveler's own making, but he is endowed by them from Allāh ﷻ. Good behavior regarding them implies that the traveler should know that he moves from one of them to the other by the will of Allāh ﷻ. He should be in them without any will of his own.

A traveler then reaches to the end of the path after his ascent in states and stations to the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ. This knowledge, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh sees it, is essentially a knowledge of dropping self direction. It is an intuitive matter within the soul that emerges from the agreement between the soul and Allāh ﷻ on dropping self direction before time, in the sub-atomic world, before the soul descended to the body.

Then, knowledge of Allāh ﷻ leads to the beholding of the Oneness in the universe in a Ṣūfī sense and tasting in a way in which the Ṣūfī does not see except One existence, i.e. the existence of Allāh ﷻ alone. Creations other than Allāh ﷻ do not really exist, or you can say that their existence is imaginary. Beholding the oneness in existence implies the necessity of dropping self direction with Allāh ﷻ, because he who beholds the greatness of Allāh ﷻ and His singular real existence annihilates his will in the way of Allāh ﷻ totally. He will not have in such beholding any involvement and capability for planning for himself.

We consequently find that Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's doctrine is composed of fully harmonious related parts, in which one cannot be understood separately from the other.

In our view, Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh was the first to lay down the doctrine of dropping self direction in its full form in Islamic Ṣūfism. What previous Ṣūfis have left of writings or words about dropping self direction were about two stations only, being reliance on Allāh ﷻ and contentment, which could not be considered a complete and coordinated doctrine as is the case with the doctrine of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh.

We therefore consider our Shaykh a Ṣūfī founder, because his Ṣūfī philosophy, as we have mentioned and we shall classify in a later chapter, is based on one foundation which explains Ṣūfī questions, both practical and theoretical, according to a special logic which its author sticks to from the beginning to the end.

Because the beginning point in the travel to Allāh ﷻ, in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's doctrine, is the dropping by the traveler of his will to Allāh ﷻ, and because all stations on the road, in spite of their differences, are based on this foundation, we shall start by explaining in this chapter the views of our Shaykh with regard to the dropping of self direction. We shall then expose the path he draws for his mureeds, showing, in the following chapter, how he uses his doctrine of dropping self direction and will in all aspects of the path and the various psychological, ethical, and metaphysical results of his doctrine.

## 2. The negation of human will and faith in fate:

As we have said, the main issue in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's Ṣūfī doctrine is that man does not have in reality a will beside the will of Allāh ﷻ. Consequently, Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh considers that man does not act except with the act of Allāh ﷻ, does not chose except with the choice of Allāh ﷻ, and declares that acts of man are created by Allāh ﷻ whether they are good or evil.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh's doctrine with regard to human acts coincides with the doctrine of human followers who have declared that all a man's acts are created by Allāh ﷻ simultaneously with his act not before it or after it. Allāh ﷻ said: "Allāh ﷻ has created you and what you do."

Because Ibn 'Atā'illāh's doctrine tallies with the Sunni doctrine, it disagrees with the Mu'tazilite's stance, which establishes existence of a will and a capability for a man and goes on to say that man is the creator of his deeds, good and evil. They denied relating evil or injustice to Allāh ﷻ. They considered those who say so to be infidels or sinners.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh disagrees with them on their saying that man's acts are independent from the acts of Allāh ﷻ. He refutes their belief that man obeys or disobeys by his own will. Listen to him saying: "...Allāh ﷻ says, 'I have created man and jinn only to worship.' He reveals that He has created these two kinds of creations to worship Him, i.e. for ordering them to do it in the same way as when you say to your slave: I have only brought you to serve me, i.e. to order you to serve me and you do it. The slave may disobey and refuse although you have not brought him to disobey you. The Mu'tazilites take the outer meaning and so they say that Allāh ﷻ has created people to obey Him, disobey Him, and commit sins by their own will. We have refuted such a creed...."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh says that Allāh ﷻ, similarly, is the creator of man's obedience and disobedience. That is because of His justice. In this, he says in reply to the Mu'tazilites: "As Allāh ﷻ is the creator of obedience by His own grace, He creates sins by His own justice. 'Say all are from Allāh ﷻ.' Why do these people not understand? In the ayah which is decisive in revoking the Mu'tazilites in their saying that Allāh ﷻ creates obedience and disobedience, Allāh ﷻ says: 'Allāh creates you and what you do.' If they say that Allāh ﷻ says: 'Allāh does not order indecency,' it should be noted that an order is different from judgment or doom. If they say that Allāh ﷻ says: 'Whatever good you gain is a way to get people to be polite with Allāh ﷻ,' He ordered us to attribute good to Him because it befits Him and to attribute evil to ourselves because it befits our existence. In this we shall be polite with Allāh ﷻ."

If the Mu'tazilites say that sin is ugly and Allāh ﷻ does not create anything ugly, the reply of our Shaykh is that sin is an ugly deed from man because it is a refusal of the order. The ugliness is not in the deed but in man who revolts. Beauty is not related to a ring in itself, but to him who clings to it. We therefore see that Ibn 'Atā'illāh finds Allāh ﷻ to be the creator of men's deeds irrespective of those deeds being in obedience or disobedience, ugly or beautiful.

Our Ṣūfī Shaykh's refusal of man's capability to create is shown from his saying to his mureeds: "The negligent looks into what he has alone, but the wise looks into what Allāh ﷻ has done with him." He believed that obedience is a grant from Allāh ﷻ endowed on men in reality, though related to man theoretically. In this connection, he says: "If he wants to show His grace to you, He creates and relates to you..."

His idea that good deeds are grants from Allāh ﷻ and bad deeds are justice from Allāh ﷻ is shown from his saying in his petition: "My Allāh ﷻ, if good deeds are shown from me, this is by Your grace to me, and if bad deeds come from me, this is by Your justice and Your evidence against me."

Both the negation of will and the fact that man's deeds, good and bad, are created by Allāh ﷻ are, in our Shaykh's view, dependent on complete faith in fate and the belief in the One Creator who created and planned everything by His own knowledge. His will is unlimited and so is His choice. His will encompasses everything in the universe and nothing escapes it. He does whatever He wishes and is not to be asked why.

Our Shaykh sees that, as man is completely governed by fate, whatever will he may have, he will not be able to pierce the walls of fate that surround him. In this respect, he says: "Innate power cannot break the walls of fate." Ibn 'Atā'illāh therefore illustrates to the traveler that all his times and moments are but judgments created by Allāh's will, ﷻ. Each is a part of fate which Allāh ﷻ decrees. He says in this

respect: "In every breath of yours, He has a fate on you, which He had predestined for you." Al-Rondi explains this statement, saying: "Breaths are minute times which revolve as long as man is alive. Each breath bears a fate that must be fulfilled, whatever that fate is. If every minutes particle of man is governed by the judgment and fate of Allāh ﷻ, and each qualifies for a duty to Allāh ﷻ for which man is responsible, there will be no room for a slave to plan his life and no reason for pursuing any of his desires."

If man cannot escape from Allāh's fate and destiny, ﷻ, he must therefore stick completely to whatever fate He had ordained for him. This is the attribute which our Shaykh asks his mureeds to stick to incessantly. In this field, he coincides with the sunnah followers in their complete belief in fate. He also coincides with philosophers who believe in fatalism, which claims that man has no power to direct events in the universe as they have all been predestined. Followers of this belief are always content with fate and subject entirely to the Supreme will breathing into the whole universe, and they do not see any free will for man.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh draws our attention to the relation between the real will of Allāh ﷻ and the so-called human will whenever he says that man's realization of the incapacity of his will leads by necessity to his realization of the incapacity of himself and consequently to his knowledge of Allāh ﷻ in contrast to that. In this respect he says: "...know that the secret in creating self direction and choice is to show His dominance. He wanted to get His slaves to know His dominance so he created in them self direction and choice...When slaves planned and directed themselves, He confronted them with His dominance, so they were shaken and crumbled down. When He got His slaves to know of His dominant will, they understood that He is the Dominant over his slaves. So He did not create will in you, or a will of your own, but to subject it to His will, hence you should know that you do not really have any will...."

We can therefore see that our Shaykh negates any real will for men. This being so, we cannot say that man has any real self direction because he who does not have a will cannot plan for himself.

How can a man plan something for himself when it has already been planned by predestination? How can he plan with Allāh ﷻ, when Allāh ﷻ is the planner for everything by His irrevocable will? The net result for our Shaykh in the negation for human will is entirely to drop self direction, as we shall see below:

### 3. The meaning of self direction and dropping it:

Self direction is the involvement with the results of things or what they will turn out to be in the future. Man, being of no will against the will of Allāh ﷻ, has no power to dictate results of things to his will or to direct the current of events according to his wish, because this is only with the Creator of all things...Allāh ﷻ.

As self direction will involve thinking into what things will be in the future, it is therefore the most sinful conduct in the travel to Allāh ﷻ and hinders the traveler from reaching, because it implies a partnership with Deity which is exclusive to Allāh ﷻ. It occupies the time of the traveler and hinders him from performing his duties of worship which help him in reaching Allāh ﷻ.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh indicates to the mureed that directing himself to his evil dictating self means a complete surrender to it along with a high regard for it. And how is this compared to the order of doubting it, striving against it and its passions and desires, with no indulgence in it?

Self direction therefore is an act of the evil dictating self which is not conquered yet. It consequently presents itself to beginners on the road to Allāh ﷻ because they are still battling with themselves and are not ascertained yet by certainty and surety. The dropping of self direction for them is their first duty in the ethics of behavior. Our Shaykh indicates that to his mureeds, saying: "Know that self direction mostly occupies beginners on the road and before they are assured in certainty and surety and solidarity, because wrong doers have answered the Shaytān in sinning and following their lust. Shaytān has therefore no need



to invite them to self direction. If he is to invite them to sin, they will instantly reply because he is not the only one that persuades them. Shaytān mainly enters into the domain of the good from the gate of self direction because he has no other opening to them. He may distract a reciter from his litany or from presence with Allāh ﷻ by getting him to contemplate wishes and desires for himself. He may whisper during the recital of his litany and spoil his clarity of mind by self direction....”

Consequently our Ṣūfī Shaykh states that no traveler will reach Allāh ﷻ unless he drops his will and self direction at the beginning of his travel, and unless he considers that negation of will and capability is the main prerequisite of the road. He is influenced in this saying by what Shaykh Abul Ḥassan As-Shādhidhuli had previously said: “A wali will not reach to Allāh ﷻ while he still has any of his self direction or choice.” We should however note that Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh does not deny the presence of a directing will in man, in the psychological sense of being a special power in him capable of adapting his behavior according to certain designed rules. He does not also deny the happening of a human act according to his own choice and aim because we see him having a big margin for good self direction like tawba, planning for living, and actions of shari’ah and worship with which a traveler draws nearer to Allāh ﷻ. So tawba, for example, is not attained unless one voluntarily stops his passion and unless he constantly thinks of means to stop it. Planning of livelihood should be accompanied by will and planning. Worshipping and shari’ah dealings should also be accompanied by will and choice. Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh does not see anything wrong in a traveler using his will in these fields provided they are not against the decrees of Allāh ﷻ and his messenger.

Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh consequently does not want a traveler who drops his self direction and will to be completely without will in a way that makes him incapable of doing any voluntary act. But being a Shaykh who raises mureeds, he wants his mureed to strengthen his own will by training himself to stop his various passions and he paves the way for him to master his wishes, urges and desires in a way as to get him always to chose the highest urges that can attain ideals in behavior. In this way, he cures the traveler both psychologically and ethically.

As our Shaykh does not deny a writing power in man from the psychological point of view, he utterly denies the presence of any will in man that plans what should happen in the universe, i.e. he denies any metaphysical power in man.

He states that Allāh ﷻ has predestined things for man since his spirit was in the world of atoms. As Allāh ﷻ has planned for man before man’s existence in the witnessed world, He also plans for him after his existence becomes manifest.

If anyone objects, saying: “How can Allāh ﷻ know a thing before it exists?” our Shaykh would reply by saying that for Allāh ﷻ, having knowledge of a thing before its existence is not different from His knowledge of it after it exists, because the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ is beyond time.

As Allāh ﷻ dominates His kingdom, upper and lower, known and unknown, and as man attests that Allāh ﷻ has that power, he should attest that Allāh ﷻ plans for him also, because the relation of man to the universe should get him to know that he is nil.

As planning for man has been predestined, and his relation is nil with the universe, which has also been predestined by Allāh ﷻ, there is consequently no room for saying that man has a will against the will of Allāh ﷻ. The bare truth is that man is fully subjected to the fate planned by Allāh ﷻ and that fate does not run according to man’s will. This is something that is being felt by every person in life.

Does it not happen that man plans for himself things which he thinks will be to his benefit and when they materialize, they work against him? Verily man does not know anything of fate: “Benefits may be the offspring of hardship and hardship the results of benefits. Harm may be in the form of labor and labor may be in the form of harm. Endowments may be concealed in calamities and calamities in



endowments....If the case is so, how can any wise man plan with Allāh ﷻ?"

There is also something else, and that is man is not his own possession. He feels he came to life without his will, he leaves it also without his will, which means that he cannot hold his own reins whenever and wherever he wishes. He is possessed by the reason that gave him life and holds his reins, which is Allāh ﷻ. The case being so, and because man is possessed by Allāh ﷻ who gives him life and annihilates him, how can man pretend that he can plan what he does not possess?

Also, man is not the creator of his deeds, as Allāh ﷻ says: "Your Sustainer creates and chooses whatever He likes." Man must therefore stop planning with Allāh ﷻ because Allāh ﷻ creates everything, He also plans everything. Because man has also no power to create, he has also no power to self direct himself. "So is he who creates like the one who does not create?" Also, as long as Allāh ﷻ chooses, it does not imply that He compels. It is only one of his attributes. It also implies that man should leave choice and direction to Allāh ﷻ, because what is for Allāh ﷻ is not for man.

It appears from the above that our Ṣūfī Shaykh Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh denies the presence of will in man that enables him to get fate to surrender to his own will. Man is a part of existence and Allāh ﷻ plans for all existence by His will to which everything is subjected. It will be contradictory therefore to say that man, who is only a part of existence, has an independent will with which he directs himself or with which he can change the course of predestined events.

Yet, does not predestination and dropping of self direction get the traveler to the imperative result that he should refrain from every deed, become motionless and adopt negative attitudes towards life in which things will be alike and where he cannot chose anything or act for himself?

It seems so from the first look. But he that plunges deep into Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's doctrine will realize that these results are completely contrary to its spirit.

Our Shaykh did not mean that belief in fate is to imply that man should be like a feather that is blown by the wind, but his belief in fate aims at an ethical and psychological target that he puts in front of the traveler, being his readiness to endure all pains and hardships and stand firmly by Allāh's judgment and fate, ﷻ. He should not be a slave either of fear and hope or of pain and joy. He can therefore bear everything by witnessing Allāh ﷻ and resorting to Him, and will be humanly free from reliance on anything else or surrender to human passions and needs.

That is what our Shaykh says about fate. As for dropping self direction and will, we do not think that adopting it will get man to be incapable of choosing for himself a labor in life.

Our Shaykh also aims, by dropping self direction, at a psychological objective which he puts in front of the eyes of the traveler. He urges him to drop his self direction in life and behavior in the sense that he should not be anxious to disclose the future because that occupies his time and tortures his thinking, in addition to getting him to dispute with the Deity, and to try to share in what is exclusively Its own. All these things cut him off from reaching to Allāh ﷻ. But does it mean that Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh believes that self direction and looking ahead is all bad?

As we have said, Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh meant by dropping self direction that the traveler would attain mental peace by not being obsessed in fortune. We do not agree however with him in condemning thinking in the future in all cases because thinking in the future is man's tool to reach higher spheres in life.

If thinking in the future helps one in what one looks for as perfections, it is commendable.

Looking into the future does not imply a contest with the Deity. It will be a bad thing if it becomes a form of sickness that obsesses man and gets him to lose the prescence of living and gets him to live distracted in his own imagination.

The future is truly with Allāh ﷻ, but Allāh ﷻ has also ordered us to work. To work, we have to plan and size up possibilities. In order to plan and size up possibilities, we have to think of the future and what it will bring. Now work will never be successful unless its future is thought of. If any work is done without thinking, it will be improvised, not based on plans or objectives, and it is consequently doomed to failure sooner or later.

Whatever the case is, our Shaykh has meant, by his belief in fate and dropping self direction, the attainment of a psycho-ethical state, i.e. something purely moral. Consequently, there is no room for saying that belief in fate and dropping self direction leads to refraining from doing anything or to becoming motionless and adopting a negative attitude in which things are alike and therefore one cannot chose for himself.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh sees that a traveler can get himself to apply means to earn his living; he can chose for himself within the limits of shari'ah. He can share with people in all aspects of their lives while all these will not prevent him from believing in fate and dropping his self direction and will. If he falls into hardship or distress, he would know that it had been predestined. If he chooses shari'ah conduct, he would know that his deeds of obedience are not created by himself, but they are the grace of Allāh ﷻ on him. If he arranges for earning a living, he should not relate his gains to his will, but to the will of Allāh ﷻ.

When he mingles with people and finds them harming him, he will bear them because of his belief that their harm is a fate from Allāh ﷻ, or because it may be a manifestation of wisdom decreed by Destiny. Therefore belief in fate and the necessity to drop self direction are two moral things which do not end up with getting the traveler to refrain from any work, or to become negative in life, but they help him to live. This idea will be shown more clearly when we find that there is no contradiction between the striving for a living and the belief in fate together with dropping self direction, as Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh sees them.

#### **4. Dropping self direction in provision:**

Ibn Atā'illāh sets from the beginning a difference between bad planning and good planning. He also states that any planning to achieve desires for the self is bad. For example, planning for sin, planning for obedience in hypocritically gaining fortunes for pride and loftiness, planning something by disobedience to Allāh ﷻ. These are examples of bad planning because they cut man from reaching Allāh ﷻ.

Examples of planning which helps one to get nearer to Allāh ﷻ are: planning for getting rid if all debts or dues to others; repeating tawba for the sake of improving it; thinking of all that suppresses passion; working for one's living in commerce, agriculture, etc, to eat from it in a halal way, and in order not to ask people. Also, planning to gain a lot of money not for pride and position, but in order to be able to help others. All these are examples of good planning and self direction and who works for them cannot be blamed.

It is clear that Ibn 'Atā'illāh does not disparage involvement in earning a living as long as one is in agreement with the orders of Allāh, on one side, and he does not pursue his personal passions, on the other.

Our Shaykh shows that man is in imperative need of earning his living because Allāh ﷻ created him in need of supplying support to his body, to give him physical power and preserve his life.

He states that this need to Allāh ﷻ for provision is a path to the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ. Man knows the perfect attributes of Allāh ﷻ when he sees his own in-completeness. Listen to the Shaykh saying in this

respect: "...know that Allāh ﷻ wanted man to feel the need for provision either because He wanted him to know Him, or because He wanted him to know Him by feeling the need of Him. Do you not see that need is a gate to Allāh ﷻ and a means that gets you to reach Him? Listen to Allāh ﷻ saying: 'Oh people, you are in need of Allāh. Allāh is the Rich, the Thankful.' He considers feeling the need of Allāh ﷻ is a means of reaching to Allāh ﷻ and staying with Him. In this respect, you will understand our Prophet's saying, ﷺ: 'He that knows his need, poverty, and himself, knows his sustainer's grace, dominance, generosity, and His other attributes....'"

He ﷺ applies his complete responsibility in fate in the field of earning a living by stating that sustenance given by Him to His slaves had been predestined before their existence. In this connection, the Shaykh says: "...and so is the case of the slave with Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ had provided for him before He created him in this life. Allāh's grace, ﷻ, preceded your existence. Your existence had been preceded by His grace and His grants preceded your coming to life. He gave the destiny before the creation of man and before his striving and work. The destiny of what He has granted since will reach you. Will He stop during your existence what He had already provided for you before your existence?"

Does Ibn 'Atā'illāh mean that because livelihood is insured by Allāh ﷻ by destiny, a traveler can leave his planning for living entirely and live on people's charity or die of hunger? He never comes to such a conclusion. He does not see any objection for a Ṣūfī who lives on his work. On the contrary, he praises such a deed and does not find it in contradiction with belief in fate and reliance on Allāh ﷻ.

He shows that working for a living has shari'ah proofs to support it. No one can blame applying means for living after Allāh ﷻ has said: "Allāh has made selling halal and usury haram," and His saying: "Get a witness for your trading." The Prophet also said: "The best earning is the earning of a worker by his own hand...." And, "An honest, truthful Muslim merchant will be with martyrs on the day of resurrection."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh constantly assumes that applying means for earning a living is praised and is necessary. Applying means for living does not contradict reliance on Allāh ﷻ in sustenance. He explains this by saying: "Know that reliance on Allāh ﷻ for sustenance does not contradict taking means for it. The Prophet ﷺ said in this respect: 'Fear Allāh ﷻ and request of Him politely.' He did not resent requesting Allāh ﷻ for matters of life. If this were contradictory to reliance on Allāh ﷻ, the Prophet ﷺ would have never said it. He did not say, 'Do not request,' but he said, 'Request politely.' The meaning is that if you ask, ask politely. The Prophet ﷺ did not prevent us from taking means for a living....He even urges us to do so."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh confirms the wisdom of using means for a living and its value by stating that Allāh ﷻ knows the fragility of people's belief and their occasion of disbelief in their predestined lot and their incapability of true reliance on Him, so He set them free to use means for living, to appease them and strengthen their hearts.

He then shows that taking means for a living saves one from loss of face and submission to people by asking them. That means he does not agree that a Ṣūfī should live depending on others. He wants a Ṣūfī to be dignified, keeping the gleam of faith showing on him and resorting only to Allāh ﷻ and not to his creations.

Our Ṣūfī Shaykh also states that working to earn a living will occupy a traveler's time and will, therefore give him no chance to disobey Allāh ﷻ or think of disobeying Him.

There is also a social benefit in applying means for a living. Ibn 'Atā'illāh states that Allāh ﷻ wanted people to be involved in the affairs of their living to get to know each other, which is a reason for friendliness, affection, and interrelations between members of the society. Allāh ﷻ said: "Believers are brothers." Planning for a living can be not commendable only in one case, as Ibn 'Atā'illāh sees it, i.e.



when a traveler is veiled by it from Allāh ﷻ, or it prevents his slavehood dues to Him. In this respect Ibn 'Atā'illāh says to his mureed: "Know that things are praised or condemned by the results they lead to. Bad planning is that which veils you from Allāh ﷻ and hinders you from serving Him and dealing with Him. Good planning is what is not like that. It will get you to approach nearer to Allāh ﷻ. Similarly life. It cannot be condemned utterly nor can it be entirely praised. What is not praised of it, is what drives you away from Allāh ﷻ and gets you to forget preparing for the hereafter."

From all the above, it is clear that although Ibn 'Atā'illāh believes in predestination, he does not see any objection for the traveler working for a living and he also sees this does not contradict reliance on Allāh ﷻ. On the contrary, he sees it as commendable and useful because it focuses the slave's heart and helps him to approach to Allāh ﷻ and get along with members of his society.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view of the non-contradiction between working for a living and reliance on Allāh ﷻ is considered to be more natural than views of some of the earlier Muslim Ṣūfīs who advocated full seclusion for worship, condemned life entirely, and who believed in, as Nicholson has said, "Reliance on Allāh ﷻ meaning in a way that gets man to be a dead body in the hands of the undertaker." They therefore did not make any effort to earn their living whether directly or indirectly. None of them engaged themselves in business, commerce, or industry; they relied in their livelihood on their Sustainer, who has the safes of the sky and the earth, and who sends his grants to them directly or through some of His creations.

We agree with Nicholson in what he states with regard to the earlier Ṣūfīs who said that reliance on Allāh ﷻ contradicts working for a living. That contradiction creates a negative attitude towards life and reliance on others for a living. Stories related about them in books dealing with their biographies confirm their understanding of reliance as such beyond any shadow of a doubt.

If Ibn 'Atā'illāh does not see any contradiction between earning a living and predestination, he also does not see any contradiction between earning a living and dropping self direction. How?

Dropping self direction with him, as we have mentioned, is a moral thing that a traveler applies on the path and aims by it to attain psychological peace. It also helps in getting him rid of distractions and helps him to concentrate on turning to Allāh ﷻ and reaching Him by not seeing his own deeds, or relating them to his will. This case of making a living is the same, as Ibn 'Atā'illāh states that if the traveler is working to earn his living, he should drop his self direction, i.e. his heart should not be constantly occupied with it and having plenty of it because this will be a veil between him and Allāh ﷻ.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh warns the traveler about laboring hard in earning a living. He shows that toil could be the toil of bodies and during it one should appeal to Allāh ﷻ to support him in it, because if toil prevails over the body, it will distract man from performing his duties in ṣhārī'ah and worship. Toil could also be tiredness of hearts caused by greed, which Ibn 'Atā'illāh psychologically defines as "the latent desire in the self to earn a living and depend on it," which leads to humiliation of the self and surrendering to people. From this toil, toil of the hearts, we have to resort to Allāh ﷻ.

Now, what is the source of greed? Ibn 'Atā'illāh replies that greed "emanates from distrust and weakness of faith, which are both emanating from a loss of light; loss of light emanates from the existence of veils. If the heart is surrounded by the lights and beholds the grants, greed will never approach it. If the light of faith is extended to the heart, it will reveal predestination and a slave will then know that Allāh ﷻ has a deposit for him, which He will get to "reach him".

Consequently, there is no way for man's rescue from greed and tiredness of heart and attainment of psychological peace except by faith in predestination, dropping self direction, and constantly relying on Allāh ﷻ. Then, Allāh ﷻ will bear the slaves' pains and toil. Allāh ﷻ says: "He that relies on Allāh, Allāh will be his ally." How can man involve himself in earning a living while Allāh ﷻ says: "I have not



created Jinn or man except to worship. I do not want them to earn for me or to feed me. Allāh ﷻ is the Razzaq, the Powerful, the Solid.” He also says: “Allāh, Who has created you, gave you rizq (sustenance). He makes you die, then He revives you.” He also says: “There is no living creature on earth which is not assured of rizq from Allāh...” He also says: “In heaven, there is your rizq and what is promised for you. By the Sustainer of heaven and earth, it is as true as your speech.”

What Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh advocates is the bare truth. In our lives, we are in dire need of dropping self direction and in dire need of attaining psychological peace for our wearied minds. We never stop thinking into earning a living and our plans for it, and what our future in life will be. In this way, our minds are tortured and our lives are disturbed. What if we work without looking at the future results, which are in our Sustainer’s hands? Why do we not discard from our imagination the idea that we have the capability to change the course of events according to our will? What if we accept the decrees of Allāh ﷻ contently and do not grumble or complain? What if we turn away fanciful hopes and stop arguing what could be the case if this thing does not happen or what it could be if it happens?

Verily, it is life which has involved and persuaded us and consequently got our hearts to be weary, our sleep to be tiresome, and veiled us from witnessing Allāh’s overall dominating grip over everything in the universe, ﷻ. What are we in relation to the universe?

Consequently, there is nothing wiser than what Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh addresses to the traveler, warning him not to get himself obsessed with life and earning a living. He says: “You labor in what has been assured for you and your negligence of what you should do is a proof that your insight is discored.”

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh also warns the traveler of the worst of what could be understood by faith in fate and dropping self direction, and that is abandoning work in reliance on what has been predestined. Allāh ﷻ did not order that. On the contrary, Allāh ﷻ orders us to work and promises to reward us. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh addresses the traveler in this connection saying: “He knew that slaves look for an exposure of His attention’s secret, so He said: ‘He selects whom ever he wishes for His mercy.’ He also knew that if He left them as such, they would neglect deeds in dependence on predestination. So He said: ‘The mercy of Allāh is near to those who do good.’”

To sum up:

Dropping self direction in earning a living or anything else in man’s life, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh sees it,  
implies man’s living in peace,  
free from fear, worry, depression,  
and free from people.

Yet dropping self direction does not mean that the traveler lives on others; it means that he should live as people live, but he should not agree to the wishes and the passions of his self, and should stop his greed, haughtiness, and pride, because they spoil his worshipping life and cut him from reaching to his highest aim: Allāh ﷻ.

Dropping self direction therefore adds a noble meaning to the life of the traveler,  
gets him to be truly free,  
to achieve mental peace,  
and to reach human perfection in its noblest form.

It does not lead to any contradiction between his life of worship and the society in which he lives.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE SELF (*NAFS*)

This chapter will cover six topics:

1. Ibn 'Atā'illāh's attention to the nafs
2. A definition of the nafs
3. Its grades
4. Its relation to the body
5. Appraisal of the nafs being the source of moral evil
6. Classification of motives of behavior

“Know that planning is from the self (*nafs*) because it is veiled.  
If the heart is rescued from its dialogue and discourse, it will not be a target for planning.”

“The origin of each sin and negligence is contentment with one's self,  
and the origin of each obedience, alertness, and chastity is discontent with the self.”

“If you cannot chose between two things, find out which of them is heavier for your self and chose it.  
Nothing is heavy for the self except what is true.”

### 1-Ibn 'Atā'illāh's attention to the nafs:

We mentioned in the previous chapter that Ibn 'Atā'illāh laid a foundation for his doctrine, being that man has no will in relation to the will of Allāh ﷻ Who rules the whole universe. We have also seen him asking his mureeds to drop their self direction and will entirely. He shows to us that such a thing is the primary prerequisite for striving against one's self, because planning is considered to be the thickest veil between the slave and Allāh ﷻ.

If the nafs of the traveler dictates planning and all lamentable thoughts, he must then really know his self, its urges, and its motives. That is why we find Ibn 'Atā'illāh as an instructing Shaykh fully preoccupied with the human nafs. He analyses in detail the powers of the nafs, diagnoses its diseases, prescribes means for recovery, and classifies motives of human behavior in general. He does all that nor for its own sake, but for helping the traveler on the Ṣūfī road to a dual destination: moral perfection and the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ by taste.

No doubt Ibn 'Atā'illāh is influenced in his view of the nafs by Ṣūfī predecessors who paid great attention to knowledge of the characteristics of the human nafs, such as hypocrisy, hidden passion, hidden polytheism, and ways of avoiding them....” As-Suhrawardi Al Baghdadi has stated, they had a special knowledge about “the nafs, its knowledge, and knowledge of its conduct.”

What is interesting about Ibn 'Atā'illāh's doctrine about the human self is his application of his idea of dropping self direction and will in a way that it becomes the classic pillar of his doctrine with regard to the self, its grades, and motives. This is explained as follows:

### 2. A definition of the nafs:

Ibn 'Atā'illāh defines the nafs by saying: “The nafs is the subtle vapory essence bearing the powers of living, sensing, and voluntary movements, and is called by the wise man the animal spirit.”

The wise man in this definition is Aristotle. The animal spirit here is what Aristotle calls the sensitive soul: Aristotle states the belief in his book, *The Spirit*, that there is in man, as a living creature, a spirit which is the reason for his life. He classifies this spirit figuratively, not really according to its functions, into three parts: (a) the vegetative spirit, related to nutrition, growth, and multiplying, (b) the sensitive

spirit, which is related to sensing and moving in space, and (c) the wise spirit, which is related to the thinking process. According to Aristotle, man is differentiated from animals by his wise spirit and animal differs from plant by its sensitive spirit.

As the self, according to Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, is the essence bearing the powers of living, sensing, and voluntary movement, it is parallel with what Aristotle calls the sensitive spirit, which is shared by both the animal and the man, and has in addition to the functions of the vegetative spirit of nutrition, growth, and multiplying, the functions of the sensing and moving voluntarily in space.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh was not directly influenced in his definitions of the nafs by Aristotle. But what seems rational and logical is that he was influenced in this respect by preceding Sūfis, notable among them Al Farabi and Aviceana, who repeated Aristotle's definition of the self and his classification of its three distinct groups of functions. They both had a great influence on philosophers and Šūfis who followed them.

### 3. Its grades:

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh believes that the nafs, which is the source of life, sense, and voluntary movement, is placed in between two powers: the body and the heart. The heart according to him is not the piece of flesh known as such, but is that sensing talent which Allāh ﷻ has placed in man. It is called by philosophers 'the speaking nafs'.

The self has three grades:

1. The domineering nafs (*nafs-l-ammara*), which is aligned with the body. It urges pursuing lower pleasures and vile passions. It is the source of sinister acts and behavior, and it pushes the heart downwards. (see Qurʾān 12:53)

2. The reproachful nafs (*nafs-l-lawwama*), which is partly illuminated by the light of the heart and therefore lives to refine itself. Whenever it sins due to its dark nature, it is supported by the heavenly light and so it blames itself. It is moving between the body and the heart. (Qurʾān 75:2)

3. The nafs at peace (*nafs al mutmaʿina*), which has been fully illuminated by the light of the heart and consequently has gotten rid of its sinister qualities and adopted good qualities. It directs itself towards the heart and forces itself completely from any link with the body. (Qurʾān 89:27)

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, in this respect, follows another Šūfi: Al Ghazali, who states that the nafs, being the human talent deposited in man, has three grades. If it becomes free from the agitation of lust, it is called the *assured* nafs. If it contradicts lust, it is called the *blaming* nafs, and if it surrenders to passion and Shaytān, it is called the *evil doing domineering* nafs. What is interesting about Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh is that he applies his doctrine of dropping self direction to the field of the human nafs and its grades mentioned above.

The evil domineering nafs, according to him, is the willing nafs, the blaming nafs is the nafs which sways between willing and dropping self direction and the nafs at peace is the nafs which is comforted with the entire dropping of self direction.

As the nafs at peace is the nafs which is "surrendering to the decrees of Allāh ﷻ and is motionless in front of His destiny, supported by His light, free of planning, and contradictory to fate, submitting to its knowledge of Who beholds it... it deserves being addressed". "Oh you nafs at peace, return to your sustainer content and satisfied. Enter among My slaves and into My paradise." (Q 89:27)

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh indicates how dropping self direction will accompany the peaceful nafs, saying that the ayah "Oh you assured nafs..." includes two reasons, each of them calling for the destruction of self direction.

First, Allāh ﷻ describes this nafs as being serene, content, and these attributes will not be realized except



by dropping self direction. A nafs will never be serene unless it drops planning with Allāh ﷻ because of its certainty of Allāh's better planning. When it is content with Allāh ﷻ, it surrenders to Him, follows His judgment, and subordinates to His orders; consequently it trusts His Deity, resorts to Him and cannot therefore be disturbed. When He supports it with the light of wisdom, He assumes it and therefore, it settles down, surrenders to Him and accepts all His decrees.

The nafs, as our Shaykh sees, is ascending in its true phases, i.e. the evil domineering, the blaming, and the peaceful until it reaches to the degree of the heart (or the spirit as he sometimes calls it). In this phase, thoughts of self direction are entirely cut off from it. If they ever come to it, they will soon vanish because the heart in this case is ascertained with faith. The nafs will therefore be assumed by the light of submission to Him. In this connection, Ibn 'Atā'illāh says to the traveler: "Know that the believer is sometimes touched by thoughts of self direction, but Allāh ﷻ does not leave him to them. Allāh ﷻ says: 'Allāh is the Guardian of those who have believed. He gets them out of darkness into light.' Allāh ﷻ gets the believer out of the darkness of self direction into the light of submission to Him. He sends His certainty to drive away their agitation. He says: "We draw truth over fraud so it kills it." A believer is sometimes touched by thoughts of self direction and agitation, but they will soon pass away and do not stay. They disintegrate and will not settle down because the light of faith has settled down within the hearts of believers and will not allow them to share its settlements...."

A sign also of the ascent of the nafs to the degree of the heart is its refrain from taking pride in worldly gains of all sorts. As a distinction between the grade of the nafs and the grade of the heart in this respect, our Shaykh says: "The exterior of creations is deceiving while the interior is wisdom. The nafs sees its exterior as deceit and the heart sees its interior as wisdom."

When a traveler's nafs ascends to the degree of the heart, he should beware the return of his evil domineering nafs to his conduct, meaning he would consequently surrender to his old habits and his reliance on self direction. In this connection Ibn 'Atā'illāh addresses his mureeds, saying: "Know that self direction emanates from the nafs when it is veiled. If the heart is freed from its discourse, it will not be touched by the strikes of self direction...." He also says: "When the heart surrenders to the planning nafs, it would be similar to a drowning man relying on another drowning man. They both sink down. A nafs relying on the heart is similar to a drowning man relying on a strong savior. So never let the heart surrender to your nafs...."

It is evident that the heart, though senior in grade to the nafs, is not secure, in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view, from the disturbance of self planning and its darkness. He therefore draws the attention of his mureed who has reached the degree of the heart not to plan with Allāh ﷻ, or his heart will not be pure. If his heart is not pure, he will not be able to approach Allāh ﷻ. His heart will be contaminated, like deeds which are contaminated with hypocrisy and showing off, and will consequently be blamed for its hypocrisy. In this respect he addresses his mureeds, saying: "As Allāh ﷻ does not like contaminated deeds, He similarly does not like a contaminated heart. He does not accept a contaminated deed and a contaminated heart cannot steer upwards to Him."

There is another degree, as Ibn 'Atā'illāh says, which is purer than the degree of the heart and that is the degree of the secret (*sirr*). Both the heart and the secret as he sees it are characterized by illumination. He says: "Lights are vehicles of both the hearts and secrets." Ibn Ajiba explains this maxim, saying: "...the heart is the reality delegated with intelligence and the secret is the reality delegated with revelation. The secret is deeper and purer than the heart... lights which are the flowing peaceful ideas and are vehicles for the hearts which carry them to the Knower of the Unknown (Allāh ﷻ). They are also vehicles for secrets which carry them to the Authority of the Mighty."



We should however notice that the nafs, whether domineering, blaming, or assured, and words like heart, spirit, and secret, are all, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh and other Ṣūfīs see them, names which describe that human inner power which is the reason for man's life, according to its purity and freedom from the bodily passions.

#### 4. Its relation with the body:

It should not be thought that there are various anfās (plural of nafs), as the different names used by Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh may indicate. With him, the nafs is essentially one, but it differs according to its grade and attributes. In essence, it is completely different from the body. The metaphysical synonymy between it and the body is however characterized by the basic difference in their natures. The nature of the body is obscure and opaque and the nature of the heart (which is a higher degree of the nafs) is luminous. There is a continuous conflict between these two natures which is suffered by the traveler who yearns to achieve moral completeness by conquering the pleasures of his body. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's view of this conflict is as follows: by its obscure opaque nature, the body tries to pull the nafs downwards. If it is attracted to it and surrenders to its motives and starts to plan and think for evil, it is called evil-domineering. If it is partially freed from its authority by the luminous power of the heart, and hesitates between planning and dropping it, and between bad thoughts and good thoughts, it is called the blaming nafs. If it is however completely freed from the opaqueness of the body and is directed towards then heart, freed from self direction, its motives and all other bad thoughts, it is called the assured nafs.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, like other Ṣūfīs, thinks that the body is the prison of the nafs and that the nafs which is chained to its body will not reach to real knowledge and true happiness unless it is purified and ascends up to higher states by means of a heavenly supply. Then, it gets out of its prison to its space of beholding. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh draws the attention of the traveler to this idea, saying: "He gave a good supply to free you from the prison of your existence to the space of your beholding."

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh believes firmly that the human nafs was in another world before it came to this world (the other world of atoms or the world of command, as Ṣūfīs call it). In that world, Allāh ﷻ showed the nafs His Oneness and it was assured of that knowledge and when it descended to this world, the body intervened between it and its previous knowledge. It is consequently required in front of Allāh ﷻ to attest to His Deity in this world once again. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh included this idea in his saying to his mureeds in his *Maxims*: "He got you to testify before He got you to behold. The outer things uttered His Deity and the hearts and secrets were assured with His Oneness."

Our Shaykh's view and other Ṣūfīs' views that knowledge is latent in the nafs and that the nafs has known it in another world before its presence in the body is based in their opinion on a Qur'ānic source. Allāh ﷻ says: "*When your sustainer took from the backs of the sons of Adam, their posterity, and got them to testify it themselves, saying, "Am I not your sustainer? They said, "Yes...."*" (Q 7:172)

We find that this view is similar to Plato's view that the human nafs was present previously in another world different from this world, before it descended to the body. It was in the company of the gods and learned through knowledge of symbols. Its knowledge of the symbols after it descended to the body has still some sort of remembrance of its previous knowledge in the company of gods.

To sum up, our Shaykh confirms that the nafs is a distinct entity different from the body and purer than it. The dominance or non-dominance of the nafs over the body explains its grades.

#### 5. Condemnation of the self as being the source of moral evil:

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh states that the nafs linked with the body is the source of all moral evil, bad deeds, and blameworthy qualities. What he says in condemnation of the nafs is either directed to the evil-domineering nafs or the blaming nafs, which moves between folly and obedience, or in other words, the nafs which has not yet been totally freed from the chains of the body.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh in his dispraise of the nafs as being the source of all evil is similar to all Muslim Ṣūfīs who rely in their disparegment of the nafs on proofs from the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, e.g. Allāh ﷻ says: "The nafs is evil-domineering." The Prophet ﷺ says: "Your enemy is your nafs which is inside of you." Ibn 'Atā'illāh shows to the traveler that his nafs, which is within himself and which is related to passions and instinct, is the source of all disobedience. He says: "The origin of all folly, heedlessness, and negligence is self gratification, and the origin of all worship, alertness, and chastity is non-contentment with the nafs."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh urges the traveler to be constantly deprecating his nafs because it is his worst enemy. He addresses him, saying: "People praise you because of what they imagine of you. Discredit your nafs because of your knowledge of it."

He then exaggerates in dispraising the nafs because it calls for bad behavior and dictates it. He advises the traveler to have a scale which can show to him the motives of his behavior and attests to him that he should disobey his nafs continuously. He says: "If there are two things of which you may chose one, look into the harder of the two for your nafs and follow it. Only truth is hard for the nafs."

Our Shaykh then advises the traveler not to accompany someone who praises himself, saying: "If you accompany a non-educated man who does not praise himself, that is better than to accompany a scholar who praises himself. Is there really knowledge with a scholar who praises himself; or is there ignorance with a non-educated man who does not praise himself?"

As the evil-domineering nafs is the source of self direction, the traveler should not agree with the nafs for its self direction because this means acceptance of it. He says to the traveler: "Your self direction is a sign of your ignorance of it. The believer knows that when he drops self direction, Allāh ﷻ will direct him, because Allāh ﷻ says: 'He that resorts to Allāh, Allāh will be his ally.' So real direction should be in dropping self direction, and beholding the nafs should be in non-beholding it."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh's exaggeration in suspecting the nafs and considering it as pure evil, reminds us of the Molamatiah, the Ṣūfī blamers who exaggerate in the dispraise of the nafs, discrediting and blaming it, and to an origin of their doctrine as mentioned by as-Salāmī in his 'Message'. He says: "Among the origins of their doctrine is the continuous accusation of the nafs, i.e. in obedience and folly...."

If the human nafs, linking with the body as the Shaykh thinks, is the origin of moral evil in man, the origin of good is the heart (or spirit). On the basis of the nearness of the nafs on one side and the goodness of the heart (or spirit), on the other side, Ibn 'Atā'illāh sets out a moral psychological theory for motives of human behavior as follows:

## 6. Classification of motives of behavior:

Ibn 'Atā'illāh relates all motives of behavior to two powers: a) the nafs clinging to the body and its passions and b) the heart or the spirit, which is entirely free from the body. Consequently, motives can be either psychological or spiritual. Motives which, either psychological or spiritual, direct the behavior of the traveler and draw results for him.

The self directed motive, as our Shaykh sees it, is not a commendable motive because it is related to the nafs, which is the source of evil. In it, the nafs finds pleasure and rest because it replies to its passion and aspirations. Such pleasure and rest are resorts only for those who like themselves and worldliness; those who are obsessed with anxiety, and who have no room for the love of Allāh ﷻ in their hearts. For one so characterized, all his deeds will be psychological. Some of his worship or obedience will be pure.

A spiritual motive is a commendable motive because it clings to the spirit. It is only shown from a lover of Allāh ﷻ who is obsessed by Him. There will be no room for the love of worldliness in his heart. All the deeds of one who is so characterized will be described as spiritual. He will not sleep, love, eat, drink,

except because these are necessities or means for ascertaining his worship. A man of this kind, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh sees him, is pure in all his deeds and silence.

Our Shaykh also calls the spiritual motive “devotion”. He means by that the purification of the intent of proximity to Allāh ﷻ from all muddles. On the other hand, he calls the psychological motive hypocrisy. He also states that in addition to the psychological and spiritual motives, there are other motives, which are mixtures of the two. The motive can have equal shares of the two, or one in which the spiritual motive is stronger or one in which the psychological motive is stronger. If the mixed motive is composed of two equal sides, it will neither be for the man or against him. If one side is greater, it will add to the traveler in as much as the weaker will degrade him.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh describes human acts as good or bad in relation to their motives. With him, a human act is good if it emanates from the spirit, bad when it emanates from the nafs, and is swinging between good and evil if the motive is a mixture of the spirit and the nafs. A traveler will not be able to proceed on the path except by striving against his self and getting it to stick continuously to goodness. He who looks deep into the classifications of Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh for motives of behavior will see that he differentiates between the body and the nafs. He then differentiates in the one nafs between two grades, one related to the body and the other related to the heart (or spirit). He then relates sets of behavior to each of the two grades.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s view in classifying human behavior differs completely from what we find with modern psychologists. The difference between what is psychological and bodily is no longer considered. Psychologists nowadays do not set a distinction between the nafs and the body and do not set differentiating boundaries between the power of the one nafs.

What is also noticeable about Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s classification of motives of behavior is that Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh has considered the important note of noble human emotions like the love of Allāh ﷻ in directing behavior.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s classification of motives of behavior relates them to the different powers of the nafs, aims at an ethical objective which is the guidance of behavior, ensuing true happiness to the traveler by teaching him the motives of his acts and enlightening him to the goodness or evil of these motives.

Consequently, it can be said that Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s search into the human nafs was not for pure research, but in order to reach ethical completeness.

It is to be mentioned that because psychology with Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh and other Ṣūfīs is mixed with morality, it does not belittle the findings of Ṣūfīs about the human nafs, its nature, classification of its powers, its grades, motives, and diagnosis of its ills.

It will be fair if research considers them as pioneers in the field of psychology. From the beginning, Ṣūfīs were psychologists because they used introspection properly. They were not satisfied with the outwardness of the nafs; they plunged deep into the human nafs in an admirable way. They knew its motives and instincts, which they call passions. They might have discovered what modern psychoanalysts call the subconscious and to which they relate different kinds of human behavior.... Their Shaykhs (shuyukh) used analyses for their mureeds and guided them to know what they did not know before about themselves. Some of them speak about the necessity of confession to the Shaykh by the mureed of all that goes on within himself; otherwise there will be a snarl over his heart.

There is a modern philosopher, Emile Boutroux, who has done justice to Ṣūfīs as researchers in the field of the human psyche. He admires them greatly for their system of introspection. Listen to him saying: “...Ṣūfīs themselves were great psychologists. Introspection of inner life was their main concern. We should therefore consider carefully their findings in the field of the human self instead of looking on them all as patients.”



## CHAPTER 3: THE JIHAD (STRUGGLE) OF THE NAFS

This chapter will cover the following topics:

1. The Meaning of Striving
2. The Necessity of the Shaykh's Supervision Over the Mureed
3. The Nafs' Exercise
4. Isolation and Seclusion
5. Dhikr
6. Striving and Dropping Self Direction

Were it not for the fields of the nafs, there would have been no travel for travelers as there is no distance between you and Him to cover. There is no gulf between you and Him to bridge it on.

He who has no professor to attach him to the chain of the followers and disclose the veil from his heart, is an illegal son in this matter who has no known father and is an imposter who has no evidence.

Nothing will get you out of your attributes except beholding His attributes.

Only the ignorant discards supplication. Grants are in the other world and supplication ends up in this world. What should be looked after indeed is what cannot be substituted for. Supplication is His demand on you, and you ask Him for His grants. His demand on you is imperative.

Because you will never reach Him except after the annihilation of your folly; you will not reach Him otherwise. But if He wishes to get you to reach Him, He covers your attributes with His, so He gets you to reach Him by what He has, not what you have.

### 1- The Meaning of Striving:

We have shown, in the previous chapter, the nature of the nafs, its grades, various powers, and its motives as seen by Ibn 'Atā'illāh. We have said that researching these subjects is not a research for its own sake, but a research into what helps the traveler to reform himself in order to reach to ethical perfection and knowledge of Allāh ﷻ.

Striving against the nafs, with Ibn 'Atā'illāh and with other Ṣūfīs, is a war against the evil domineering

By struggling, behavior will be good, and the nafs will escalate up by various degrees, ascend into states and stations and finally be assured with the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ.

Our Ṣūfī Shaykh Ibn 'Atā'illāh consequently considers the nafs' strife as the beginning of the road to Allāh ﷻ and tells us that without it, travel will be useless. In this connection, one of his *Maxims* says: "Were it not for the fields of the nafs, there would have been no travel for travelers as there is no distance between you and Him to cover. There is no gulf between you and Him to bridge it on." That means that unless there is striving against the nafs, travel will be useless because there is no real distance nor gulf between travelers and their sustainer. The travel on the road to Allāh ﷻ is merely to cross the barriers of the nafs. These words like travel, travelers, fields, gulf, reach, etc., as Al Rondi says, are all words used by Ibn 'Atā'illāh and other Ṣūfīs in pure theoretical subjects which they substitute for physical matters, and they are related to the slave and no one else. From Al Rondi's words, it is understood that the Ṣūfī road and all that is related to it, such as states and knowledge, are all subjective things or personal tastes which the traveler himself finds.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh, like other Ṣūfīs, calls the strife with the nafs "the greater jihad", following the Prophet ﷺ, and he urges the traveler to engage in it. He addresses him, saying: "How can you strive against yourself and you are invigorating it by passion until it conquers you? You do not really know. The heart is a tree



which is watered by obedience. Its fruits are its tastes.... If the heart dries up, its fruits fall down. When it does not bear fruit, repeat supplications frequently, and do not be like the patient who says, I shall not take the medicine unless I recover. It is said to him, you will not recover, unless you take the medicine. Jihad has nothing secret in it. Strive against yourself therefore while you know that it is really severe, i.e. a greater jihad."

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh indicates that the traveler's strife against himself by getting it to stick to obedience is an extremely strenuous matter, because the evil domineering nafs is latently appealed to by sin. In this connection, he says in one of his *Maxims*: "The nafs' lot in sin is quite visible; its lot in obedience is hidden and curing what is hidden is quite difficult." Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh also shows that the self-struggle is at the beginning done against one's wish, but later it becomes a habit which will eventually emanate naturally from the traveler who will be loving to obey and refrain from disobedience. In this he says to the traveler: "You will not be able to cure yourself at the beginning but when your nafs tastes grants, self cure will come voluntarily. The sweetness which it used to find in sin, it will now find in obedience."

The traveler's self-strife must be made under the supervision of a guiding Shaykh who knows the road to Allāh ﷻ; otherwise the traveler will not reach Allāh ﷻ. He may be a man of state, not an ascertained Ṣūfī. The jihad of the nafs, in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's view, has four integrated stages:

- (1) the nafs exercises (from the ethical point of view), and that is substituting bad behavior by its adverse good behavior.
- (2) going into isolation, seclusion, and dhikr, which are practiced strivings that will yield for the traveler love, annihilation, and knowledge.
- (3) Ordering the nafs to stick to the practiced ethics, which correct anything that stands against the traveler on the road.
- (4) The nafs' ascent in various stations and states.

If the nafs ascends as such during the self-struggle, the traveler will end up with the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ and will be utterly complete in his behavior.

We shall deal in this chapter with the necessity of the Shaykh's supervision over the mureed in his strife and we shall talk about two phases of his struggle being ethical self-strife, and practicing Ṣūfī strife as isolation, seclusion, and dhikr. After this chapter, we shall deal with the ethics of practical behavior, which the traveler has to stick to. We shall then talk about states and stations, and we shall indicate, in all these stages, how our Shaykh applies his doctrine of dropping self direction.

## 2- The necessity for the Shaykh's supervision over the mureed in the struggle of the nafs:

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh believes that a traveler on the Ṣūfī road, who is striving against his nafs, must be guided by a knowledgeable Shaykh who knows the road to Allāh ﷻ. He should submit to him completely. In this respect he says: "...he who intends to find the road of success, must first find an ascertained Shaykh who has trodden the road, who is assured in the service of Allāh ﷻ and has abandoned his passion... when he finds him, he has to respond fully to his orders and refrain from what he forbids...."

Our Shaykh also says that every traveler on the Ṣūfī road must be related to a guiding professor: "He who has no professor to attach him to the chain of followers and disclose the veil from his heart, is an illegal son in this matter who has no known father and is an imposter who has no evidence. If he has no light, he will be vanquished by his states, he will not accept knowledge or instruction and will not benefit from training."

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh in his belief that a traveler should have a Shaykh follows other Ṣūfis. al Qushairi says in his *Message*: "A mureed must be brought up by a Shaykh. If he has no professor, he will never succeed...."

Also Yazīd Al Bastami says: "He who has no leader, the shaytan will be his leader." al Dakkak says: "If the tree grows by itself without one who plants it, it will bear leaves but will never bear fruit and so is the mureed. If he has no professor to give him the tariqa (path) breath by breath, he will only worship his passion and will not be delivered."

The Shaykh's first job with the traveler is to show him his nafs' hidden side, guide him to Allāh ﷻ, teach him to escape from everything else and accompany him on the road until he reaches its end. Following the Shaykh will be by a grant from Allāh ﷻ. It is Allāh ﷻ alone who will lead the traveler to the Shaykh and will show to him how endeared he is by Allāh ﷻ. Ibn 'Atā'illāh says in this respect: "Following cannot be to a wali who is unknown in the realm of Allāh ﷻ, but it must be to a wali whom Allāh ﷻ has led you to, and shown to you his station with Him. He will aid you by his humanity in his station. You will submit to him and he will lead you on the road of success. He shows you your nafs' follies open and hidden, leads you to Allāh ﷻ, lets you escape from everything else and accompanies you on the road until you reach Allāh ﷻ. He shows you your nafs' evil, and the grants of Allāh ﷻ to you. Your knowledge of your nafs' evil will help you to escape it and not to rely on yourself. Your knowledge of the grants of Allāh ﷻ will help you to steer your efforts towards Him and become grateful to Him...."

The Shaykh guiding to Allāh ﷻ does not do this work, in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view, by words or statements he says to the traveler only, but also by his moral indication and his states. He frees him from his nafs' passions and cleans the mirror of his heart until he gets him to reach to Allāh ﷻ. In this he says to the traveler: "Your Shaykh is not he whom you have heard from...your Shaykh is he whom you have taken from. Your Shaykh is not he whose words you have heard, but he whose inspiration has flown into you. Your Shaykh is not he who has invited you to the gate, but your Shaykh is he who has unveiled you. Your Shaykh is not he whose words impressed you, but he who has filled you up by his state. Your Shaykh is he who has freed you from the prison of your passion and got you to enter the House of the Sustainer. Your Shaykh is he who cleans the mirror of your heart until it reflects the lights of Allāh ﷻ. He raises you up to Allāh ﷻ and accompanies you until you reach Him. He has been with you until he put you in the hands of Allāh ﷻ and then he said to you: 'There you are. You are with your Sustainer....'"

Ibn 'Atā'illāh indicates that the relationship between the Shaykh and the mureed is a fatherly relationship. As a son is related to his father, a mureed is related to his Shaykh. The fatherhood of the road should be even more looked after. In this he says: "...he that relates a student to a professor who is not his professor, is similar to him that relates a son to someone who is not his father. This fatherhood deserves more attention to confirm...."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh, like Suhrawardi, sees the resemblance of actual fatherhood to the relation of the Shaykh with the mureed. The relation of the Shaykh with the mureed is a spiritual fatherhood.

When the mureed successfully finds a guiding Shaykh and he wants to strive against his nafs, its follies and defects, he should not be embarrassed to show them all to his Shaykh because the mureed, in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view, is like the patient and the Shaykh is his doctor. A doctor has the right to look at the hidden parts of the patient to cure him. In this he says: "The Shaykh must investigate the conditions of mureeds and the mureeds must tell their Shaykh about everything to the extent of even exposing the interior of their nafs, because the Shaykh is like the doctor and the patient is like a hidden part who had to be shown to the doctor for the sake of treatment." He also says: "A mureed (among the travelers) who exposes his illness will be cured. He may be told what he thought to be illness is not in fact illness or he may be told how to treat his illness."

In this way, Ibn 'Atā'illāh gives us a clear picture of how the relation between the Shaykh and the mureed should be. He that contemplates this relationship will see that it is a spiritual one. A mureed has to be fully respectful of his Shaykh, carrying out all his orders with regard to behavior because he believes that his Shaykh is ascertained with perfection in all its shapes and that he is consequently capable of clearing

out all his follies and directing him to the solution of all his emotional problems.

A mureed, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh shows, will be, in a modern psychological sense, constantly submitting to his Shaykh's suggestions, which direct his behavior to an ideal. The guiding Shaykh is like the capable psycho-therapist who knows the ills of his patient (the traveler), and he cleans them all out due to his expert knowledge of the psychological sicknesses and ways to cure them.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh has referred to another job which the Shaykh does from the psychological angle, i.e. convincing. A mureed may imagine that he has illness within his psyche, and when he reveals it to his Shaykh and the Shaykh finds that it is not an illness, he can convince him accordingly, and so he is cured. If, however, the Shaykh finds real illness, he will cure it psychologically in a way that he gets his patient to get rid of it completely.

### 3- Exercises of the nafs (self):

The guiding Shaykh advises the traveler to practice self exercises at the beginning of his journey. This is the first stage in the struggle of the nafs. Self exercise, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh and other Sūfīs see it, is a strenuous effort which the traveler makes to get himself rid of his nafs' follies, like jealousy, grudges, hypocrisy, pride, and other bad qualities which are the greatest barriers on the path to Allāh ﷻ.

Self exercise is based on the Qurʾān and the life of the Prophet ﷺ, as al Rondi indicates in his interpretation of the *'Maxims'*. He says: "Ethics needed by the mureed are external and internal: the external follows the internal. Internal ethics are to adorn oneself in totally improving one's ethics. The Prophet ﷺ said: "My sustainer has refined my manners in a good way. Then he ordered me to practice good manners and said, 'Forgive, instruct for manners and abandon the ignorant'." This will not be attained, after the support of Allāh ﷻ, except by exercise and strife.

The base on which exercises of the nafs stands, in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's view, is in beholding the attributes of Allāh ﷻ and trying to imitate them as much as humanly possible. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh therefore indicates to the traveler that he will not get rid of his bad manners except by beholding the attributes of Allāh ﷻ. He says: "You will not get out of yourself except by beholding His attributes."

Imitating the attributes of Allāh ﷻ as much as humanly possible is the traveler's way to true happiness. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh says: "...the slave's happiness is in his trial to imitate the attributes of Allāh ﷻ in as much as he can imagine of his due merit, until he becomes near to Allāh ﷻ ...nearness is meant to be nearness of stations and grades, not of distance or place."

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh warns the traveler of his nafs' defects, which hinder the path of some travelers. He says: "Defects in the travel to Allāh ﷻ which hinder the road in front of some travelers are ten: a) seeing deeds with admiration, b) growing hope, c) the nafs' whispering of its' reaching walihood, d) envying people's esteem, e) leaning on ru'yas (veridical dreams), f) relying on litanies, g) enjoying inspired ideas, h) contentment with promise, I) being content with make-believe, j) assuredness with Allāh ﷻ without work.

Our Shaykh indicates that non-contentment with Allāh ﷻ and the non-surrender to His judgment, while being content with one's self, is the worst that could come out of a traveler in his travel. He says to him: "Signs of fall from Allāh's eyes ﷻ (attention) are three: self contentment, non contentment with Allāh ﷻ, and satisfaction thinking he is sharing choice in his destiny."

Our Shaykh urges the traveler to tame himself for stopping his own choice and will entirely, and shows to him that these are only confined to Allāh ﷻ. He says: "Signs of confinement to Allāh ﷻ are three: leaving choice, planning, and will."

Consequently, if the traveler abandons choice, planning, and will, becomes content with Allāh ﷻ, and does not try to share with Him in His judgment, he will be doing the best a traveler can do on the Sūfī path, and becomes, in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's view, a member of the chosen people of Allāh ﷻ.



In order to show how exercises of the nafs can be done from the ethical point of view, i.e. being a substitution of bad manners by good manners, we shall, as an example, show the way a traveler can deliver himself from three bad qualities, which have to be exterminated and replaced by their opposite qualities. These are hypocrisy, loftiness (pride), and leaning on people. Their opposites are: sincerity, humbleness, and resorting to Allāh ﷻ. We shall elaborate as follows:

1.) **hypocrisy**, in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view, is among the bad qualities which hinder the traveler of the path to Allāh ﷻ. He defines it as follows: "Hypocrisy is polytheism and polytheism is a loss of deeds. The worst sort of hypocrisy is that which is a pretending of faith. Allāh ﷻ says: "There is among the people one whose speech about the life of this world will interest you, and he attests to Allāh ﷻ for what he has in his heart, while he is the worst enemy...."

Hypocrisy, in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view, may be open or hidden. Open hypocrisy may be in the form of someone making a show of his worship in front of people. The hidden may be a show of one's deeds while nobody sees him. On this kind of hypocrisy, Ibn 'Atā'illāh speaks to the traveler. We shall look into al Rondi's explanation of this statement to know its deeper concepts, and he says:

"A man's hypocrisy of his deeds in front of people does not need a proof, but his hypocrisy of his deeds while nobody sees him is a hidden thing, the signs of which are what goes on within a Ṣūfī's heart that people esteem him, place him in congregations and gatherings, and show quickness in responding to his needs.

"If anyone maligns him in giving him the right which he sees for himself, he will protest. He also finds a difference in being hurt and others being hurt to the extent that some idiots warn those who do not quickly respond to them that Allah ﷻ will punish them and that Allah ﷻ will not leave them until He makes him victorious over others and avenges for him. If a slave finds these signs within himself, he should know that he is a hypocrite in spite of not being noticed by man."

Commenting on Al Rondi's explanation of hidden hypocrisy as seen by Ibn 'Atā'illāh, we say: "This kind of hypocrisy means that the traveler sees a special station for his worship and obedience, so that he asks reward for them from people or from Allāh ﷻ. It spoils worship and deeds. The opposite of hypocrisy, as Ibn 'Atā'illāh sees, is sincerity (dedication). Ibn 'Atā'illāh says: "Know that anything can be contaminated. If it is cleaned (from contamination), it becomes pure and the act will be purified as such: dedication will be achieved by purifying from all imperfections the intention of getting near to Allāh ﷻ.

"Dedication requires the traveler's deeds and worship to be pure and free from turbidity. He also must hide his own states and the endowments granted to him by Allāh ﷻ. He should not have any intention of circulating them among people in order that they know of his proximity. In this respect, Ibn 'Atā'illāh says to the traveler: "Your longing to see people knowing of your gifts is a proof of your insincerity in your worship."

2.) **Loftiness or conceit** is, as our Shaykh thinks, another among the bad qualities of the nafs which hinder the traveler on the path to Allāh ﷻ. It is a quality that gets a man to treat people from above. If the slave, as Ibn 'Atā'illāh says, is proud of his worship, thinking others are beneath him, full of self esteem, asking people to give him his right and not giving their due to others, he is a haughty one for whom a bad ending is waiting. Consequently, a traveler must eradicate haughtiness from his nafs, and replace it by humility. Ibn 'Atā'illāh then shows the ethics of humility to the traveler: he should first refrain from asserting humility for himself. He should not think that he is practicing humility, because he who asserts humility for himself asserts in fact privilege for himself at the same time. Ibn 'Atā'illāh says to the traveler: "He who asserts humility for himself is in fact haughty, because to assert humility for yourself is to assert a privilege for yourself which you are giving up." Humility cannot be when one thinks he is doing less than what he has. Humility is only when one thinks he is really less than what he has done."



Humility requires the traveler not to look for fame and publicity, because these are great barriers on the path to Allāh ﷻ, and are goals which have to be abandoned. Our Shaykh warns the traveler not to be asking for fame, and that he should stick to anonymity. In this connection, he says to the traveler: “Bury your existence in the land of anonymity. What is planted without being buried will bear no fruit.” Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh thinks that true humility does not exist except after the traveler beholds the greatness of Allāh ﷻ and has revelations of His various attributes. At that moment, the traveler will feel the nearness to his nafs in relating to the greatness of Allāh ﷻ. Sources of vanity will then be extinguished within him and he will become humble. In this respect, Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh says: “Real humility is that which emanates from beholding the greatness of Allāh ﷻ and the manifestation of His attributes.”

3.) **Reliance on people** is among the worst qualities of the nafs which hinder the traveler’s path to Allāh ﷻ. Reliance on people, as our Shaykh sees it, means dependence on people and not on Allāh ﷻ. This leads the traveler to submit to people and beg for their contentment. He will therefore follow their whims in order to get their acceptance. A traveler on the Ṣūfī path who wishes to reach Allāh ﷻ and become truthful in all his cases must eradicate this inclination from his heart, and make a sole target of all his deeds the contentment of Allāh ﷻ alone. He should turn to Him and not to people in order that Allāh ﷻ may turn to him and accept him. Around this meaning, Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh says to the traveler: “Do not look for the acceptance of people to you, but to Allāh’s ﷻ acceptance, and free yourself from their esteem of you by witnessing Allāh’s ﷻ generosity to you.” Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh sees two other results coming out of reliance on people: greed and humiliation. They are very unworthy qualities, and work against true submission to Allāh ﷻ. Greed is looking for what is in people’s hands. Whenever it is found, there will consequently be humiliation and submission to people. Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh put that meaning in a nice sentence in which he says to the mureed: “Trunks of humiliation grow only on seeds of greed.” He indicates to the traveler that looking for what people have in their possession means entire slavery to them; he says to him: “You are a free man when you do not desire of what people possess and you are a slave of what you look for to possess.”

The opposite of reliance on people, looking for what they own and submitting to them, is what Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh calls: “uplifting zeal”, or what Ṣūfīs call in another word, “devotion”. Uplifting of zeal means that a traveler must not be eager to have what others possess and that he should never resort to others. Ibn ‘Atā’Illāh explains this in one of his poems as follows:

Allāh ﷻ knows that thy zeal discards lowliness by my chastity and purity.  
 Why do I not keep out my need from people,  
 And show them how kings are noble?  
 Shall I show them that I am ready for them,  
 while I know that none of them can do anything?  
 How can I ask for the bounty of Allāh ﷻ from his creations?  
 If I do this, I shall certainly be unloving.  
 The complaint of the weak to the weak is incapacity that leads to falling down.  
 Ask for the bounty of Allāh ﷻ Who has covered all the people with His mercy.  
 Resort to Him in what you wish for.  
 Do not deviate from standing by His door.

He also says to his mureed: “The reason of your uplifting of zeal to Allah should be certainty that He has not brought you to His kingdom except to give to you, grant to you, and therefore there is no room for directing your needs to others. If Allah ﷻ has provided Ṣūfīs with the understanding of their assuredness of Him as a replacement for demanding of Him, how can He not get them to understand that their riches come from Him alone and not to ask His creatures?”

In the *Maxims* he states that the knower by Allah should not ask people,

Because exercising of the nafs, as we have seen, is considered to be a complete change of manners, it is consequently an extremely strenuous effort. It is not only a symbolic change of the traveler's interior, but it extends to sticking to certain practiced rules of behavior; hypocrisy, vanity, and reliance on people are not only unworthy qualities latent within the nafs, as our Shaykh sees them, but in addition they produce kinds of behavior with people which are called hypocrisy, vanity, and reliance on people. Sincerity, humility, and devotion are not only moral commendable qualities that are produced within the nafs, but they also produce norms of behavior called sincerity, humility, and chastity. Consequently, we can say that a nafs exercise, following our Shaykh's views, is a rigorous exercise which a Ṣūfī practices to achieve moral perfection in itself on one hand, and in his behavior in society on the other.

Nafs exercises are attained psychologically in three stages: a) abstract thinking, b) feeling the assuredness of the thought, and c) practical application to achieve it. To explain this view, we say: in the first stage, the traveler starts by getting fully convinced that he should get rid of his bad attributes in order to reach Allāh ﷻ. This may be by a suggestion from his Shaykh or by auto-suggestion. In the second stage, the traveler searches for these bad habits within himself until he feels their presence and so the abstract thought dims out to become real realization of them. In the third stage, the traveler takes on various kinds of behavior which are the opposite of these attributes and so these bad habits vanish away and his idea of getting rid of them is realized.

After the traveler tames his nafs by refining its qualities, as we have seen, his Shaykh commands him to go into isolation and seclusion and to practice hard bodily jihad, like hunger, thirst, staying up late at night, silence, and sticking to dhikr, which is a continuous repetition of the Name of Allāh ﷻ in order that his heart is cleaned and becomes ready for annihilation and getting himself to spiritually taste the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ. We shall now talk about isolation and seclusion and then about dhikr and its rules.

#### 4- Isolation and seclusion:

Ibn 'Atā'illāh finds that it is absolutely necessary for a traveler to enter into isolation and seclusion. He says:

Know that if you went to enter into the presence of the Truth and take from Him by leaving people, then this will not happen while you still have in your heart Deity for others than Him...you must get yourself isolated from people and prefer seclusion to aggregation. As much as you are far from people, will be your nearness to the Truth internally and externally....

He also urges the mureed to isolation and seclusion, saying: "Go into isolation and seclusion. He that takes isolation as his way, grace will be his lot. He who is true in his isolation will gain the Truth's gifts and endowments. Their signs are: uncovering of veils, revival of the heart, and ascertainment of love."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh, in his call for the traveler to practice isolation and seclusion, is in fact a follower of Ṣūfīs who preceded him who entirely support isolation and seclusion in a place for worship. They base this doctrine on the Prophet's isolation ﷺ in the cave of Hira before the descent of the divine inspiration until his soul became clean and was ready for the light of the prophethood.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh distinguishes between isolation and seclusion. Isolation, as he sees it, means symbolic, not real separation from people in a way a traveler should always have surveillance over himself, taking care in not occupying his mind in a way with the world or having his heart and organs preoccupied with people. Ibn 'Atā'illāh explains this state to his mureed by saying:

"If you separate from people, do not look to their esteem of you, because what is needed is to abandon occupation with them, and not to abandon their selves for their blunders; otherwise your heart will not be cleaned from worldly wishes."

Isolation must be accompanied by constant continuous thinking together with introspection in order that the nafs discovers its failings. There must be a complete abandoning of thinking of people's affairs, a cessation of involvement in their news. Isolation of this sort is most beneficial to the heart. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh says in the *Maxims* in this connection: "Nothing is more beneficial to the heart than an isolation that leads to thought (wisdom)." He also says about the thought that accompanies the isolation: "The thought is the candle of the heart: if it does not exist, there will be no light in the heart."

The thought accompanying isolation could be a contemplation of Allāh's creations ﷻ so that the traveler can use them as proofs and signs for the capability of their Creator. This might be what Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh has meant by saying: "The thought is the heart's travel on the road to other things." When the traveler fully ascertains his isolation, and when he finds pleasure in loneliness and in that he can really alienate himself from people, he then enters seclusion.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh defines seclusion, as an end, by the discourse of the secrets with the Truth when it does not see anything but Him and, as a means to this end, by dedication to Allāh ﷻ and abandoning everything else.

Seclusion will not be correct unless it is preceded by the following:

- 1.) exercise of the nafs by refining behavior and discarding heedlessness (the first stage we mentioned earlier).
- 2.) Reconfirmation by the traveler of his faith according to true sunnah.
- 3.) Learning what makes worship perfect.
- 4.) Tawba (repentance) of all sins.

The value of seclusion, in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's view, is that it cleans the mirror of the heart completely from marks that have been made on it during the days of neglect and worldly living. These are marks, each of which pile on the other, until the heart rusts with them.

As for how to go into seclusion, Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh tells us that it should be made in a special house and according to certain rules.

The seclusion house should have certain characteristics: its height must be equal to a man's height, its length just sufficient for praying, and its breadth must be sufficient for a man to sit in it. It should have no holes to let light enter. It should be far from noises. Its door should be low and can be shut firmly, and it should be in a house in which people live. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh differs in this matter from al-Ghazali, who sees only one condition for the house of seclusion: it should only be dark. He sometimes even discards the need for this kind of house, as we understand from his saying: "The value of seclusion is to drive away distraction and to get the traveler to reign over his sight and hearing because these are passages to the heart... this can be only realized in a dark place. If the Ṣūfī does not find a dark place, he can wrap his head or clothe himself in a dress or sheet. In this case, he will hear the call of the Truth and behold the magnanimity of the Divine presence. Do not you see that the Prophet ﷺ reached Him when he was in this shape: "Oh thou wrapped up in thy raiment! Oh thou enveloped in thy dark!"

As for the practical rules which a traveler has to observe when entering into seclusion, the most important of them are the following:

- 1.) He should wash, purify his body, clean his garment, and intend to approach tAllāh ﷻ by his seclusion.
- 2.) He should not tell anybody of it.
- 3.) He should confine his interior not to wander into the universe. The wandering of thinking is most detrimental to seclusion, and will prevent it from bearing its fruit. That means a traveler must focus his attention on Allāh ﷻ alone.



- 4.) He should decrease movement.
- 5.) His meals should be with him or behind the door of his room
- 6.) He should not get utterly hungry or completely filled up.
- 7.) His food should not involve animal meat and he should drink water by sucking it.
- 8.) He should prepare his meal by himself.
- 9.) His dress must be to assure convenience to him
- 10.) He should not sleep in seclusion unless he is forced to sleep
- 11.) He should frequently stop himself.
- 12.) He should only pray fards (obligatory prayers) and other ordinary prayers.

A traveler should be steadfast in his seclusion, silent, not rejoicing in praise or being upset by criticism, and should himself prepare what he needs and not get others to do anything for him.

If he cannot do so, he should leave seclusion, and go into isolation to tame himself. When he tames his nafs, he can go back to seclusion cheerfully, and free from hardship or jihad of the nafs. Our Shaykh warns the traveler about nafs exercises during seclusion, and advises him to do these during the isolation period until he is used to loneliness. In his seclusion, he should not force himself in hunger, thirst, or any other hardship.

In this seclusion, as our Shaykh states, a traveler will be subject to what can be called tidings (*waridat*). Some of them are shatanic and others are angelic. A traveler should know the difference between each of them in order not to be fogged. Ibn 'Atā'illāh explains this difference and its personal effects as follows: "The difference between angelic and shatanic tidings is that the angelic tiding is followed by coolness, pleasure, has no sting, does not stir you up, and leaves knowledge for you. As for the shatanic, it is followed by distraction, pain, puzzlement, and indecision."

For seclusion, there is a special dhikr which the traveler has to repeat in his heart. That is the name of *Allāh* or the name *Huwa*.

The traveler's solitude in his seclusion, as mentioned by our Shaykh above, shows to us how a traveler on the Ṣūfī path should cut off his relation with the outer world in order to live in a limited world of his own in which he turns to himself. That may explain why modern psychologists who have studied Ṣūfism indicate that Ṣūfis are "introverts".

When we also contemplate the rules of seclusion, we shall see that what is important of them is that a Ṣūfī should stop thinking in creations, i.e. he should stop thinking of anything related to the outer world and stick only to one idea, which is the "annihilation in Allāh ﷻ". That is why, in his seclusion, he repeats the name "Allāh" continuously in order not to be dragged by any other idea.

The traveler's submission only to one idea that reigns over him is similar to what modern psychologists call "mono-ideaism". It is a state in which feeling becomes so narrow that there will be no room in it except for one idea of a simple content which occupies the mind in a way that drives away any other idea from arising.

It is also understood what effects reduction of food to what is other than from animal origin, thirst, staying up late at night, silence, and frequently stopping breathing, will have on the psychological powers of the traveler. He will be in a state of trance but accompanied at the same time by a spiritual delight which he alone can taste.



It should be noticed that this sort of nafs exercise, as mentioned earlier, is not confined only to Muslim Ṣūfis, but we also find Christian “Ṣūfis” in the middle ages taking the hard road, which they called “via pūgativa”. It is similar, on the whole, as Nicholson says, to the Ṣūfī path which Muslim Ṣūfis tread. The via pūgativa also calls for hunger, thirst, silence and for self strife. That via pūgativa aims at “communion with God”. It is a series of successive stages for the “communion with God”. It is also the only road that leads to illumination as they see it.

Among the most eminent Christians who took that road was St. Catherine of Genoa (1447-1510 AD), who endured fasting, solitude, and mortification of the nafs.

Any researcher will find a strong resemblance between Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh and the Christian Spanish “Ṣūfī” St. John of the Cross (1542-1591AD) with regard to isolation and seclusion. St. John of the Cross sees, as Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh saw before him, “the necessity to enter into a ‘Vide universal’ and abandon everything”. That means for him that a Ṣūfī should isolate himself from the outer world with all its persuasion. The means to do it, in his view and also in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s, is solitude in a special place, silence, and dhikr in addition to the abandonment of all recollections of the world and sticking only to one thing, i.e. religious recollections only.

### 5- Dhikr:

Dhikr, or continuous repetition of the name of Allāh ﷻ, is one of the most important practical jihads for the traveler on the Ṣūfī path. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh paid full attention to dhikr and its practical rules in a way which other Ṣūfī Muslims had not done. He wrote a special book on it, which he called: *The Key to Success*. In this book, he spoke in detail about the ethics of dhikr and how it has been practiced by Shādhīli mureeds since the seventh century of Hijra.

Dhikr exercise with Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, as with other Ṣūfis, is based on an Islamic foundation from the Qurʾān and sunnah.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh defines dhikr as “emancipation from forgetfulness by getting the heart to be always present with the Truth; or, it is the repetition of the name ‘Allāh’ by heart or tongue, or repeating one of His attributes, or one of His orders, acts, or anything else that leads to proximity to Allāh ﷻ.”

A traveler should not practice dhikr except after purifying his conduct by nafs exercise and isolation from people and crossing all barriers. These are the stages of jihad of the nafs we talked of earlier.

Dhikr, in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s view, is of two kinds: limited dhikr and unlimited dhikr. The limited dhikr is that which is made during and after ṣalat (prayers), in Hajj, before sleep, after getting up from sleep, before eating, etc.... by it, he means that dhikr which is confined to time or place. The unlimited dhikr, however, is that which is not confined to any time or place. It can be praise of Allāh ﷻ, reciting ayāt (verses of the Qurʾān), or repetition of the Name: ‘Allāh’.

Dhikr may be the names of Allāh ﷻ which are, in his view, the medicine for the traveler’s ailments. He analyses each of these names according to the meaning latent in it, and proposes a certain spiritual benefit of it to the traveler. He says, for example: “His name ‘The Truthful’ (*as-Ṣadiq*), endows the traveler with a truthful tongue, the Ṣūfī with truthfulness of the heart and the knower with assuredness. His name ‘The Resurrector’ (*al-Bā’ith*) is to be repeated by the neglectful and not by those who ask for annihilation. His name “The Forgiver” (*al-ʿAfu*) is good for the commoners because it redeems them. It is not appropriate for travelers to Allāh ﷻ because it implies remembrance of sin and a Ṣūfī’s dhikr should neither include sin nor even a mention of paradise.

He also states that dhikr can be by reciting litanies in an approach to Allāh ﷻ. These litanies can be special supplications set by Shaykhs (*shuyukh*) to their mureeds or part of the Qurʾān to be recited at certain times.

Dhikr by litanies is the way of beginners and it is their most important duty in their travel. He says in this respect: "A beginner should have two litanies, one after the morning ṣalat (*fajr*), and one after the sunset ṣalat (*maghrib*). But for the assured and people who have approached the end, dhikr is their concern at all times."

Ibn 'Atā'illāh, however, warns the traveler of thinking that he has become one of the assured and therefore he may leave his litany, or that he may be affected by any idea telling him to belittle his litany; supplication will be most needed by him to become near to Allāh ﷻ.... Listen to him speaking to his mureed, warning and advising: "Only the ignorant discards supplication. Grants are in the other world and supplication ends up in this world. What should be looked after, indeed, is what cannot be substituted for. Supplication is His demand on you and you ask Him for His grants. His demand on you is imperative."

With regard to the practical nature of dhikr, Ibn 'Atā'illāh sets some rules which we sum up as follows:

It can be an individual dhikr, which the traveler practices in his isolation or anywhere else, and can be a collective dhikr, which is made in special gatherings. Dhikr can be in a low voice or a high voice. It should preferably be low if the traveler is alone and by himself. If he is however among a group, he may supplicate loudly but his recital and tone should be in concord with the group's.

Sitting for dhikr has a certain shape also.

He who sits for dhikr must sit like a needy and humble man. He should get his head to lean over his knees and close his eyes. In this way, the heart is alerted, gets clean from abstractions, and is ready to receive light, tidings, and secrets. His garment should be clean and perfumed.

If the traveler is following a Shaykh, he should always have his Shaykh in his imagination because he is his companion on the path, his guide, and supporter. He should understand that his taking from his Shaykh is considered as taking from the Prophet ﷺ.

As for the wordings of supplication, there are five:

- 1.) supplication by "Lā Illāha Illa'llāh, Muḥammadan Rasūl Allāh"  
(there is no God but Allāh, Muhammad is the messenger of Allāh).
- 2.) Supplication by: "Lā Illāha Illa'llāh" (There is no God but Allāh).
- 3.) Supplication by "Subḥan Allāh" (Glory be to Allāh).
- 4.) Supplication by the name "Allāh".
- 5.) Supplication by the name "Huwa" (He).

Supplication by the name "Huwa", in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view, is the highest degree of supplication. It is an announcement of the end of certainty. It suffices the traveler from anything else because it gets him to be consumed into realities of proximity and to submit his secrets to the True. For him, there will be nothing else to concern himself with. Dhikr has a practical value as a means of purifying the heart of its bad attributes and replacing them by other good attributes.

It also has a gnostic value because it is the traveler's means to know (by taste) Allāh ﷻ and the other heavenly matters. In addition to these, it has a metaphysical value because it is the traveler's means for ascertaining the collapse of creations and establishing the existence of the real One: Allāh ﷻ. In other words, it is the Ṣūfī's means to establish metaphysical rules for the interpretation of existence based on the taste, not on mental proofs.

1- As for the first value, i.e. the metaphysical, Ibn 'Atā'illāh sees that dhikr cleans the mirror of the heart from stains of the nafs and its defects. It is therefore a food for the heart and spirits. Allāh ﷻ says: "Those who believed and their hearts are assured by supplication of Allāh. By supplication of Allāh, hearts are assured (alt: hearts find rest)."

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh, with regard to the purification of the heart by dhikr, says: "...heart is the seat of sincerity. It could be directed not to Allāh ﷻ. The nafs is directed towards people, it is evil-commanding, it is following its passions and leaning to folly. All those are waste that veils the heart from sincerity and from steering towards Allāh ﷻ. The nafs obeys the orders of Shaytān. If it were not so obedient, Shaytān would never have found any entry to it. Its acceptance of Shaytān is a proof of negligence and alienation from Allāh ﷻ. Alienation is a thick veil which is darkness."

"The traveler therefore needs to drive away this darkness and clean away dirt. Darkness is banished by light. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'The ṣalat is light....' He also said: 'The purification of the hearts and cleansing them from rust is by ṣalat on me.' The traveler is consequently ordered, by starting with ṣalat on The Prophet ﷺ, to purify the seat of sincerity (heart) as there will be no sincerity with its remaining ills.... making a lot of ṣalat on the Prophet ﷺ bears in the heart the fruit of loving him. Assured love of him bears full attention for him and what he demonstrated of attributes and manners...."

The repetition of the traveler of ṣalat on the Prophet ﷺ is a sure means to conquer his nafs, purifying it, getting ascertained with the love of the Prophet ﷺ, and following his commendable manners.

2- As for the second value of dhikr, our Shaykh finds there is a gnostic value. Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh thinks that dhikr has three kinds: a) tongue dhikr, b) heart dhikr, and c) secret dhikr. He tells us that the secret dhikr alone is the means for attaining knowledge (gnosis). He sometimes calls it "absent dhikr" or "hidden dhikr". It is the dhikr in which the petitioner is absent from himself completely and is absent even from noticing that he is making dhikr; a case which he called "annihilation" (*fanaa*). Here, the petitioner is faced with knowledge from the "higher sphere". Listen to him explain how dhikr leads to gnosis in a state of Ṣūfī annihilation: "...if He that is petitioned for, reigns over the heart, and when dhikr vanishes and relinquishes that the petitioner does not look to it not to his heart, there will be annihilation in which man does not see himself, does not feel any of his senses or things latent within him. This will be obsession (annihilation). If it lasts until it becomes a strong habit and a usual feature, the traveler is lifted up to the "higher sphere" where he witnesses real existence. The Malakut is printed on him and he will behold the sacredness of Deity. The first thing he will behold in that sphere is the essence of angels and spirits of prophets in a beautiful shape flowing on him with realities. This happens at the beginning, then he ascends up to other grades which are unexplainable. He is also rewarded with Allāh's authority over everything, ﷻ. This is the fruit of dhikr."

Dhikr is therefore the traveler's means, in Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh's view, to ascertain gnosis by Allāh ﷻ, or, in his own words, "...it opens the door of knowledge in the heart." That shows its utmost importance for the traveler on his path to Allāh ﷻ and that it leads to the most precious targets.

3- As for the third value of dhikr, Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh views it as a metaphysical value. He states that when the rememberer mentions 'Lā Illāha Illa'llāh', he is putting together denial and proof. The whole world will all be grouped for him in one entity and consequently he will not see with the eye of his heart except the One.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh also shows that dhikr with the name Allāh, which is the singular Name, achieves seven things: 1) beholding everything else (by his taste), 2) esteeming Allāh's orders ﷻ by uncovering (inner beholding), 3) the fall of creations (in the eye of his heart), 4) annihilation in the overall (by being overwhelmed), 5) resorting to Allāh ﷻ (constantly), 6) surveillance of breaths (by his secret), and 7) occurrence of adoration, i.e. not seeing but Allāh ﷻ and not sensing but Him.

It is shown from the above that the petitioner is ascertained at the end of his dhikr by seeing with the eye of his heart the collapse of all creations. For him, they will have no existence side by side to the existence of Allāh's Oneness, ﷻ, which is the real existence. How can this be achieved psychologically? Dhikr, in fact, is not a mechanical repetition which the traveler makes, but it is a repetition accompanied by auto suggestion and a focus of attention on one single subject which is higher than material, i.e. Allāh ﷻ. By



sticking to deep and continuous thinking on this subject in addition to other bodily exercise, the Ṣūfī gradually loses his identity and in this case, the struggle between his body and natural motives on one side and the ideal he wants to attain, on the other, will stop. He achieves a state which Leuba, the modern psychologist, calls: “psychic homogeneity”.

No doubt when the petitioner reaches the state in which he cuts himself off from the world of phenomenon and in which he firmly believes in the existence of the Only One (Allāh ﷻ), he will experience moments in which he feels deeply that the world of phenomenon does not really exist. Ibn 'Atā'illāh explains this state by saying: “The world will all be reorganized for the petitioner as one entity and he will not see with the eyes of his heart...except the One. He will make the “prayer of the dead” on all creations.” He also expressed it by “the collapse of all creations (in the eye of his heart)”. It is a pure matter of taste which the petitioner alone tastes and no one else shares with him this experience.

### 6- Jihad of the nafs and dropping self direction:

Ibn 'Atā'illāh applies his doctrine of dropping self direction and will in the field of the jihad, and he comes out of this application with a deep and original view.

He states that jihad of the nafs by the traveler, though taming it ethically or through isolation and seclusion and dhikr, is not a reason in itself for conquering the nafs. It is only an aspect of his will, while his will is only illusory and does not really exist in the real reason in His Existence. It is the will of Allāh ﷻ which controls everything in the universe. It is also the reason for the traveler's victory in the battle between his heart and his nafs or between his luminous nature and dark nature. In this respect he says: “Light is the army of the heart as darkness is the army of the nafs. If Allāh ﷻ wishes a slave to be victorious, He supplies him with the army of light and cuts off the army of darkness and others from him.”

The Shaykh then shows that reaching Allāh ﷻ is not by eliminating the bad qualities of man through self jihad, because if that were so, it would be relying on man's will, while man in fact has no will. Reaching to Allāh ﷻ relies on the will of Allāh ﷻ alone, which controls everything in the universe in a way that if Allāh ﷻ wants the traveler to reach Him, He will get him to do so by His sheer attention and grace. Listen to Ibn 'Atā'illāh explaining this meaning to the traveler:

If you think you reach Him after all your defects and allegations vanish,  
you will never reach Him.  
Yet, if He wishes you to reach Him,  
He will cover your qualities with His qualities and your being by His being  
and so you reach Him by what He has for you, not what you have for Him.

Jihad of the nafs is therefore, in his view, a negative effort in fact, which the traveler makes and which does not necessarily get him to reach Allāh ﷻ. It has no bearing on the grant and grace of Allāh ﷻ to the traveler. Yet, can man reach to Allāh ﷻ without jihad and endurance in the ascent through states and stations?

Ibn 'Atā'illāh replies to this question by saying that reaching to Allāh ﷻ through jihad is possible. And in this respect he distinguishes between two categories of Ṣūfīs: the category of the “Attracted”, who reach Allāh ﷻ by His Mercy. They know Allāh ﷻ without the toil of ascending through stations; and the category of the “Travelers”, who strive against their nafs, endure ascending in states and stations, and finally reach to the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh shows how each category will be with regard to the exercise of dhikr. The *attracted* have their lights which are ahead of their dhikr; their lights are not results of their dhikr, but are grants from Allāh ﷻ to them. *Travelers* are the opposite. Their dhikr preceeds their lights; in other words, jihad comes before their lights arise. The difference between the attracted and the travelers is shown in what Ibn 'Atā'illāh says to his mureed in one of his *Maxims*:



“There are people whose lights precede their dhikr, and people whose dhikr precedes their lights; people whose dhikr and lights go together, and people who have neither dhikr nor lights. We take refuge in Allāh ﷻ from that. There is a petitioner who supplicates to let light into his heart, a petitioner whose heart is lit, so he supplicates, and a petitioner whose light and dhikr are equal. By his dhikr, he is guided, and with his light he guides.”

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh also shows to us that the petitioner, whether an attracted or a traveler, has no will in reality to rise up into the various degrees of dhikr, but it is all left up to the will of Allāh ﷻ. He says to his mureed advisingly: “Do not abandon dhikr, because even if you find that you are not present with Allāh ﷻ in your dhikr, neglecting petitioning Him is worse than your absent-mindedness which supplicates Him. Allāh ﷻ, with His grace, may elevate you from the state of supplicating him in absent-mindedness to alert supplication, from alert supplication to supplication with presence, from supplication with presence to supplication with annihilation from everything except Him. This is not difficult for Allāh ﷻ.”

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s view with regard to considering nafs-jihad as an effort that does not by necessity lead to Allāh ﷻ, and his sayings about attraction, reaching to knowledge of Allāh ﷻ without strife, and ascent into states and stations, is clearly different from the view of other Ṣūfīs who confirm jihad for crossing barriers of the nafs as a means to reach Allāh ﷻ. They strongly stress its importance and the firm relation between jihad and reaching as a cause and effect. There is a difference, for example, between Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh and al Qushairi, who says about nafs-jihad: “He that decorates his exterior with jihad, Allāh ﷻ will decorate his interior with beholding. Allāh ﷻ says: ‘Those who strive for Us, We shall lead them to our paths.’ Know that he who does not start by jihad of the nafs, will not wear a single smell of his tariqa.”

Also, Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh differs in this connection from the view of ʿAbdul Raḥmān as-Salāmī, who is quoted to have said: “He who finds that anything will be disclosed to him or revealed to him in this tariqa without sticking to jihad, will be wrong (to think so).” al-Kamashkhanawi said about Ṣūfī jihad: “...know that the path of exercise and jihad is a must. A traveler will never purify his nafs while animal pleasures are still ruling over him...after (nafs-jihad), he will know himself and witness his Sustainer....”

But doesn’t one feel the presence of a contradiction in what our Ṣūfī says, urging the traveler for nafs-jihad, which he calls the greater jihad that is imperative for purifying the nafs, which can by necessity get the traveler to reach to Allāh ﷻ — and what he at the same time says indicating that this jihad is not real?

It seems at first glance that there is such a contradiction, but a deep look into Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh’s doctrine will definitely show that this contradiction is in fact imaginary and not real.

Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh might have meant that jihad exercise is a must because Allāh ﷻ has commanded it. That gets the traveler to fight against all his passions and to conquer them, by his will, provided that this exercise should be accompanied, spiritually, by dropping self direction and will so that as the traveler reaches Allāh ﷻ, he should not be proud of his voluntary acts and obedience. He should not relate his reaching to his own will, but should feel it was due to Allāh’s grace. This, in a way, can be considered a solution for the whole problem, i.e. the problem of the existence of human will.

But it seems that the truth in this problem is different. When our Shāykh states that nafs-jihad is a means for reaching to Allāh ﷻ, he in fact wants to show the incapability of human will and to show at the same time that the traveler’s reach to Allāh ﷻ is a matter that has been predestined. How can an act of destiny be a result of a human act?

Consequently, whatever Ibn ʿAtāʾIllāh says about jihad of the nafs on the road to Allāh ﷻ does not change the bases of his whole doctrine, that man’s entire life has been predestined and subject to fate. Man cannot be described as having an independent will. He has no real power for self direction. Therefore, the traveler’s nafs-jihad, though it seemingly looks voluntary, is in the end related, like everything else, to the will of Allāh ﷻ. The case is the same with all human acts, which seem voluntary and willful, yet they cannot pierce through the barrier of fate and change any of destiny’s judgments.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE NAFS AND ETHICS OF BEHAVIOR:

“Your wish for destitution, while Allāh has placed you within the state of working for a living, is a hidden folly. Your wish for a means of living while Allāh has placed you in destitution is an abasement from noble feelings.”

“Your demand on Him is an accusation of Him and an absence from Him. Your demand on others than Him is a sign of your impoliteness with Him. It is due to your extremity from Him.”

“A sign of reliance on deeds is the diminishing of hope (of redemption) when falling into folly.”

“Do not travel from a creation to another creation. Travel from creations to the Creator. To your Sustainer is the end.”

“If a traveler’s zeal stops where a revelation was disclosed to him, calls of reality will always tell him: ‘What you need is ahead of you!’ When creations are disclosed, their essences call: ‘We are only a persuasion, so do not become a nonbeliever!’

1. **Ethics of behavior**
2. **Destitution and earning a living**
3. **Time**
4. **Requesting, giving, and rejection**
5. **The balance of deeds**
6. **Pure worship**
7. **Approaching and against persuasion by it**
8. **Commentary**

### 1- Ethics of behavior:

We have seen, with our Shaykh, how a traveler goes into two stages of jihad of the nafs. In the first, his nafs exercise works ethically by replacing bad qualities by their opposite good qualities in order to achieve ethical perfection within himself, and in his own practical behavior within society. The second is his practice of hard strife, like isolation and seclusion and dhikr, etc. to make himself ready for states of adoration, annihilation, and gnosis of Allāh.

Then comes a third stage in nafs: jihad, in which the traveler tames himself with the ethics of behavior.

Ethics of behavior, with all Ṣūfis, are the general rules which a traveler must apply in all aspects of his conduct. Al Haddād says: “Ṣūfism is entire politeness. There is politeness for each time, politeness for each state, politeness for each station. He that sticks to this politeness will be mature. He that loses politeness will be very far while he thinks he is near, and refused while he thinks that he has been accepted.” Dhul-Nūn Al Masri says: “If a mureed exceeds the limit of politeness, he will return to where he came from.” Al Jariri says: “Ṣūfism is a surveillance of all states and sticking to politeness.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh pays full attention to the ethics of the travel to Allāh, being a guiding Shaykh who shows the traveler the twists and pitfalls of the road to Allāh. He included these ethics in his book *Al-Hikam (Maxims)* in the form of a letter to the mureed, and advises him never to deviate from them, otherwise he will not reach. These ethics are considered to be the crux of his experience and special taste.

The first of these which our Shaykh deals with are the ethics of destitution and gaining a living, time, requesting, granting, rejection, ethics of deeds and worship, inclination to Allāh, caution against being persuaded in any way. He does not include them all in one volume, but expresses them in various and

remote places, making it difficult for the researcher to combine them together and find out relationships among them.

If nafs-exercises by refining manners, which is the first stage in the nafs-jihad, as we have shown, show to us the relation of the traveler with himself to mend his matter, correct his behavior with people and the society in which he lives, nafs-jihad by observing ethics of behavior shows us how the relation between the traveler and his Sustainer should be and what the traveler must consider in order to overcome all obstacles on the road to Allāh. That enables us to say that getting the nafs to stick to the ethics of behavior is itself a correction by the traveler of his relation with his Sustainer in all shapes.

## **2.- Destitution and earning a living:**

The first a traveler should know of the ethics of behavior, in our Shaykh's view, are the ethics of destitution and earning a living. Destitution, as he sees it, means that the traveler should not be concerned with means of living, and concentrate entirely on the requisites of the Ṣūfī road. The traveler is now called the "destitute".

Earning a living means that a traveler is concerned with aspects of life and earning a living.

It is no fundamental condition, with Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, that a traveler on the road should be a destitute. It is preferable, in many cases, that he should earn his living. His earning of his living will not hinder his travel as long as he is not veiled by those means from Allāh and as long as he keeps the rules of behavior in them.

Yet, there is a question which faces us here. Are the destitute and the earner of the same degree as travelers of the Ṣūfī path? We shall let Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh answer this question himself. He says: "They are not so. Allāh will not make equal one who concentrates on his worship with him that works for his own living even if he is pious in it. If, however, the destitute and the earner are equal in the knowledge of Allāh, the destitute is better, higher, and more perfect...."

Our Shaykh makes the destitute equal to the earner with respect to their knowledge of Allāh, yet He prefers the destitute because he thinks that he who is concerned with the means of earning a living would rarely be rescued from offence and would rarely have his worship and obedience so pure as to bring him nearer to Allāh. That is because he mingles with the worldly and forgetful. This view of his explains to us his understanding of the Ṣūfī's relationship with the society in which he lives. He never admits that a Ṣūfī should depend for his living on others, but that he should himself earn his living. True he prefers destitution, but he also believes that earning a living is a noble state. Had Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh preferred destitution entirely and without condition, we would have said that his Ṣūfism urges the escape from society and the full retreat to one's own interior in a way that makes the Ṣūfī useless to others.

Whether destitute, or an earner, a traveler should, in Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh's view, drop self direction entirely. If a traveler works for his living, he should not leave it for destitution, but he should resort fully to Allāh, because it is He Who gets him out of one state to another. Why should he do so, by himself, when he found his benefit in taking means for earning a living? Does not it happen sometimes that when an earner leaves on his earning by his own self, his faith is sometimes shaken and that he goes to begging from people, becomes entirely concerned with worldliness, and is consequently thrown into the ocean of extermination and never reaches to Allāh?!

If the traveler is a destitute, his politeness provides that he should not return by his own will to gaining a means of living. He should never look for what people possess, otherwise the door of grace for what others have will be opened in his heart, and thus he will resort to the darkness of means and their stress. In such a case, the earner will be considered better because he has not walked on and then turned back.

Consequently, in our Shaykh's view, a traveler should not get out of the state of earning to the state of destitution by himself. That will be a mark of his hidden passion. In this connection, he says to the traveler: "Your wish for destitution, while Allāh has placed you within the state of working for a living, is a hidden folly. Your wish for using means of living while Allāh has placed you in destitution is an abasement from noble feelings."

When we think of the ethics of destitution and earning, with Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, we find that they are based on dropping self direction and will. A traveler, whether a destitute or an earner, should be entirely subordinate to Allāh's will wherever He places him, and he should not get out of one state to the other by his own will, against real slavehood in addition to resorting to one's self and subordinating to its passion.

### 3. Tme:

The entire submission of the traveler to states and ethics of behavior Allāh places him in, and in a way in which he never looks for a transfer from one to the other, is what Ibn 'Ata'illāh and other Ṣūfis call the submission to the command of "time".

Submission to the command of time, as Ṣūfis say, is among the most cherished ethics in traveling to Allāh. They mean by it what Allāh chooses for them and not what they chose for themselves. They often say someone is under the command of time and they means that he is submitting to what goes on in him by the unknown, not by himself'.

Our Shaykh goes more deeply in analyzing the meaning of "time" and he advises the traveler to submit constantly to the judgment and warns him against producing anything by his own will other than what Allāh has wanted for him in that "time", because this will be a challenge to Deity and a resort to his own will, and both reveal his full ignorance of the tariqa. In this, he says: "Nothing is left but ignorance for him who wants to produce, in a time, other than what Allāh had produced in it."

The value of submission to the command of time, in Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's view, is that the traveler can give what is due to each "time". If the traveler is in a time of folly, he is due to repent. If he is in a time of obedience, he is due to see Allāh's grant and endowment on him. If he is in a time of hardship or examination, he is due to endure and be patient. If he is in a time of abundance, he is due to be grateful. Consequently, there is for each time its share of slave hood due to Allāh, which he has to give instantly and not to retard for other times.

Consequently, again the traveler should not ask Allāh to get him out of one state to the other or, in other words, from one "time" to another. Politeness requires him to leave it to Allāh's will. In this he says to the traveler: "Do not ask Him to get you out of a state to another. If He so wishes, He will do it without getting you out."

The traveler should know that time does not accept being retarded in any way. He should know that if any of them escapes him, he will never regain it. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh in this connection distinguishes between two kinds of dues: "dues in time" and "dues for time". The first includes external worship, e.g. salat, fasting, etc. if a traveler retards any of them, he can do it in another time. The other kind is dues for integral dealings, which are required by his states and spiritual condition. Each of them had a "right" on him which he must give instantly; otherwise, he will not reach. In this connection, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh addresses the traveler, saying: "There are rights for times which can be given back or retarded and there are time rights which cannot be given later because in each time that comes to you, Allāh has an assured right on you in it. How can you give it its right, when you have not given Allāh's right in it?"

We therefore suggest, together with Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, that submission to the command of time is one of the most important ethics of behavior on the path to Allāh, and that it is also based on dropping self direction and choice, because if the traveler is submitting to the command of his time, it means he has



no choice with Allāh in any way. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh exaggerates in getting the traveler to stick to dropping self direction when he forbids him to ask Allāh to get him out of one state to another because such an act is a result of passion of the nafs.

Yet, does it mean that a traveler should not ask Allāh for anything during his travel? The answer is as follows:

#### **4- Requesting, granting, and rejection:**

Requesting, or asking people or Allāh by the mureed, is disliked by Ibn AtaʾIllah. As for asking people, it is clear. But how can asking Allāh also be disparaged?! Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh replies by saying that the traveler must be sure of Allāh's endowing him with benefits. If he asks Allāh for anything, it implies that he is uncertain of Allāh. His uncertainty is adverse to his slave hood to Allāh.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, however, does not carry on saying that asking Allāh is uncommendable. How can asking Allāh be uncommendable, when Allāh says: "Ask me, I will respond to you." He shows that asking will be commendable when it only shows the need to Allāh.

As Allāh responds to the needy if he asks Him, the request of the traveler who shows his need to Allāh will be an indication of Allāh's response to him and granting to him. In this respect Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says to the traveler: "When he gets your tongue to utter a request to Him, know that He wishes to give to you."

Showing need to Allāh in asking Him coincides, in Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh's view, with the ethics of slave hood. A request for one's own personal desires is not the other request. In this, he says to the mureed: "Do not make your request a means for His grant to you; your understating of Him then will be incomplete. Your request should be to manifest your slave hood and your execution of the rights of Deity."

When a traveler asks Allāh, and no response is shown, it will be impolite to tell Allāh that He has delayed His response. A traveler has to oblige himself to politeness and not ask. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says here: "Do not tell Allāh that He has retarded replying to your request, but tell yourself you are not yet fully polite."

What Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh wants his mureed to stick to, is to stop asking Allāh in every case due to the following three reasons:

- 1) he should be sure of what had been predestined by Allāh for him. There is no room for asking something that has been formerly predestined for him. If he asks Allāh for something and it is achieved, he should never think that his will has anything to do with it. How can his succeeding request be a cause for a former predestined order? Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says to his mureed: "How can your late request be a cause for His former grant? The order of destiny is too sacred to have causes."
- 2) A traveler should get himself involved in duties of worship and nafs-jihad and dhikr, so as not to have time left for requesting Allāh. This is clear from his saying to the mureed: "Politeness may indicate to them to stop requesting due to dependence on his predestination and due to their obsessing in dhikr."
- 3) The third reason which urges the traveler to abandon requesting is his full understanding of Allāh's grace and His rejection at the same time. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh thinks that the traveler in the beginning of his travel is usually attracted by his own personal passions, whether sensory or moral. A traveler may look to realize any one of these passions and so he will ask Allāh for it, and Allāh may give it to him. This grant, as our Shaykh sees, is sheer rejection because if Allāh allows a traveler to achieve his passion a lot, he will be veiled with this achievement from Allāh. The contrary of that is the traveler who has not achieved any of

his desires. He will be in a state with Allāh in which he is not distracted by anything to hinder him from giving the dues of slave hood. Allāh’s rejection in this case will be in reality sheer granting. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says in this respect: “He may give you to reject you, and He may reject your request to grant you.” He also says: “When he opens for you the door of understanding in rejection, rejection will be to you real granting.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh understood the wisdom of granting and rejection and his explanation for them is deep. He considers granting an indication of Allāh’s grace and rejection and an indication of His dominance. When Allāh grants to a traveler and rejects his request, or in other words, He shows him His grace and dominance, it means that He wants the traveler to understand these attributes of His. He says in this connection: “When He gives to you, He gets you to behold His mercy. When He rejects your request, He shows you His dominance. In both cases, He gets you to know Him and approaches you with His kindness to you.”

Consequently granting and rejecting by Allāh for the traveler’s requests is an avenue for the traveler in which he knows Allāh through His mercy and dominance.

We then find Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh plunging deep into psychologically analyzing the ideas of granting and rejection. He states that the traveler must be fully stable, psychologically speaking, when Allāh grants him anything or nothing, i.e. he should be indifferent. He should not rejoice when granted or be depressed when rejected because his joy and depression are indications of his resorting to himself, his will, his desires, and his lot, and these are uncommendable for the traveler. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh tells us that a traveler of this worth is considered, in relation to the assured knowers, as a baby to a mature man. In this, he says to his mureed:

“When you rejoice when you are given, and are depressed when rejected, you should know that this is an indication of your childhood and falseness in your slave hood.”

If we consider this directive of granting and rejection as seen by Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh in our day-to-day life, we shall see how deep he is in analyzing the human nafs and its motives. In our daily life, we rejoice and we suffer. We rejoice when life and its means come to us and in this case we imagine that these are results of our deeds and will. It may also happen that means of life abandon us in spite of ourselves and we become greatly depressed. Due to the succession of joy and depression in our lives, life becomes unbearable because we always concern ourselves with the idea of how to keep hold of life and its means for ourselves. Yet, if anyone is balanced enough that he can see joy should not be exaggerated when life’s means come to him, he will not feel unhappy when they leave him. A man then can endure and accept hardships, stand on his feet in the battle of living, and become very brave and sure of himself.

When a traveler is assured of predestination, gets himself concerned with worship and nafs-jihad, and understands Allāh’s wisdom in granting and rejection, there will be no room left for him to ask Allāh for anything during travel.

A traveler dropping his requests to Allāh is in fact an over emphasis on the part of Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh that the traveler should drop all his will and desires. Dropping the will and desires by the traveler is considered by the Shaykh to be the balance which weighs all acts of behavior during his travel. He calls it sincerity. We explain it as follows:

### 5- balance of deeds:

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says that the traveler of the path approaches Allāh in his behavior by various acts like salat, fasting, reciting litanies, dhikr, etc. In his early stage of travel, he thinks his dependence on such deeds will get him to reach Allāh, and that without them he will not. You will therefore find him, if he fails in doing any of them or fails in a sin or folly, very miserable, because he believes that such a failure will cut him off from Allāh.

To this beginner who depends on his deeds, Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says: “A sign of dependence on deeds is the presence of diminishing hope in the case of falling into sin.”

On the contrary, the assured knower, though practicing acts of worship as an avenue for a proximity to Allāh, does not rely on them. If he does not perfect any duties or falls in a mistake, his hope in Allāh does not decrease. He witnesses his neglect or fall as a result of Allāh’s justice because Allāh creates all the traveler’s deeds, good and bad. You will therefore find him in equilibrium in his fear and hope, joy and depression, because he beholds Allāh in all his movement and rest and because of his full faith that, in reality, he has no will of his own and that he is surrounded with the fences of destiny.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh calls non dependence on deeds and freeing them from human will, sincerity, or devotion. He considers it the essence or spirit of all deeds. He says: “Deeds are symbols and their essence is the presence of sincerity in them.”

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh shows to the traveler that all his deeds and worship are not resulting from his own will, but that they all come from Allāh through His mercy and bestowal. He should not therefore rejoice in them as fruits of his effort because they are not so. He says:

“Do not be happy with obedience if you see it emanating from yourself.  
But be happy when you see it coming from Allāh to you.”

“Say, by Allāh’s grace and mercy, they would rejoice. He is more beneficial than all that they gather.”

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh groups travelers into two categories: The advancing and the arriving, and with him, they are both shut off from seeing their deeds and from witnessing states or at best they should be so.

Those who are advancing on the road disregard their own deeds, busy purifying their deeds and states from impurities. They do not see any degree for their deeds or states because they are not yet ascertained with truthfulness with Allāh in them.

Those who have disembarked are in the presence of Allāh. They see nothing but Him. They are absented by witnessing Allāh from witnessing their deeds or states.

Listen to him saying in this respect: “He cuts those who are advancing to Him and those who have reached Him from seeing their deeds and states. As for those who are advancing, that is because they are not yet ascertained with truthfulness with Allāh. As for those who have reached, He made them absent by witnessing Him from seeing Him.”

Consequently, we see together with Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh that the most accurate scale for measuring the correction of behavior is the non-reliance of the traveler on his deeds of obedience or on relating them to his own will. That shows to us the extent to which Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh goes in believing in the doctrine of sunnah followers who believe that Allāh is the creator of all man’s deeds including obedience and folly. It also shows us the extent in which he believes that man has no will to which he can really relate any of his deeds at all.

## **6- pure worship:**

Our Shāykh considered that the traveler’s worship, litanies and dhikr, if performed to gain stations or grants of any sorts, will be imperfect because they include an element of achieving self benefit.

He states that the traveler who strives with his nafs to free it from its worldly desires, in hope of gaining stations and states and ascending from one creation to another, is really revolving around himself. What he has left from the beginning of travel, he returns back to. The Shāykh advises the traveler in this connection: “Do not travel from a creation to a creation....travel from creations to the Creator. To your Sustainer is the destination.”

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh states that a true Ṣūfī is not like that. He does not hope for any personal gain from his worship. He only worships Allāh in fulfillment of rights due to Him, and looking for His attributes of kindness, love, grace, etc. In this he says: "He that worships Him for something he hopes for of himself, or to avoid His punishment, will not be fully giving His rights to Him."

He then deepens his concept of pure worship and applies his doctrine of dropping self direction and will, emphasizing that the traveler should not ask for compensation of any kind for his deeds or a reward or price for them because in reality, he has no choice or deed of his own. The doer is Allāh. He creates the acts of people. Therefore how can a traveler ask for a price for something he has not done?

If he theoretically believes that man has a will and performs deeds, we find him also confirming that the acceptance of man's acts depends in the end on Allāh's acceptance of him. How can man be sure of that acceptance? We therefore find him warning the traveler not to ask for compensation for any of his deeds, saying: "Do not ask for compensation for a deed you have not done. It will be good enough for you as a reward, that He will accept it."

Consequently, the whole matter from its beginning to its end relies on Allāh's will and not on the will of man.

He once again warns the traveler not to ask for compensation for a deed because he is asked in all his deeds for sincerity. Sincerity, as he explained earlier in the "balance of deeds", means dropping the will. How can a traveler's deed be sincere when he asks for compensation for it? In this case, he will no doubt be insincere. Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says here: "Whenever you ask for a compensation for a deed, you are asked about your sincerity in it."

He also shows that a traveler's obedience is a gift from Allāh to him. How can he ask for compensation for it? Does any reasonable man ask for compensation for a gift that has been presented to him? He says: "How can you ask for a reward for something He has given to you as charity? How can you ask for a price for charity He has bestowed upon you?"

Our Shaykh shows that a traveler's worship should therefore be pure from desires of the nafs. It should be sincere and in it the traveler should free himself from his ideas of power and capability, and base himself on his deep conviction of dropping self direction and will and that man does not create his deeds.

He who studies Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh's commentary about pure worship will find that it is based on analysis, depth, and comprehensiveness. There is a great difference between it and Rabaa Al Adawia's famous worship, which she explained when asked about the truth of her faith. She said: "I have not worshipped Allāh because of fear of His fire, otherwise I'll be like the bad slave who will work if frightened, nor in love for paradise, otherwise I'll be like the bad wage earner who works if he is paid. I worship Him for loving Him and yearning for Him."

Our Shaykh's standing in this connection is the standing of an assured Ṣūfī who bases the rules of his behavior on a profound theory, while Rabia's standing is the standing of a Ṣūfī who expresses her findings when she is overcome by her state. There is a difference between an assured Ṣūfī who has been ascertained and a Ṣūfī who is one of those of passions and states.

Related to the ethics of pure worship with Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh are the ethics of approaching Allāh during traveling and caution of persuasion, as we shall show below:

## **7- inclination and caution against pervasion:**

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh states that when a traveler sees a special degree for his worship and asks for a reward for it, he will be vain. When he is proud of his worship, it means he has committed a mistake on the path which will veil him from Allāh. He will therefore get away gradually from Allāh without



noticing. In such a case, he must correct his leaning to Allāh and should beware Allāh's pervasion of him.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh shows to us that the traveler will either turn himself to Allāh voluntarily or forcefully. It will be good for him and suitable for him that he turns to Allāh voluntarily instead of being examined by hardship and consequently turned to Allāh forcibly. He will then be like a commoner who is forced by hardship and calamities to turn to Allāh because he is involved in his material sensuousness and does not see Allāh's overall grip that holds everything.

Our Shaykh then shows that turning to Allāh voluntarily is caused by witnessing Allāh's grace and by free faith in his kindness. He consequently urges his mureed that his approach to Allāh should be of this sort and warns him not to approach Allāh because he is so forced by hardship and crises. He says to him:

"He who does not turn to Allāh through His kind grace,  
will be dragged to Him by the chains of examination."

If a traveler is witnessing Allāh's grace during his approach to Him, he is obliged to perform all requirements of slave hood.

If he however, meets Allāh's grace to him by his continuous misdemeanors, most likely he will be punished. He should be very cautious of Allāh's perpetual kindness to him while he is perpetually misbehaving, because this may be a sort of Allāh's dragging of him away. Ibn 'Atā'illāh says: "Be afraid of His kindness to you while you are always misbehaving, because this may be a dragging of you. 'We shall drag them away while they do not know.'"

Pervasion, or subtle insinuation, is of three kinds as Ibn 'Atā'illāh sees it:

- 1) It can be an obvious punishment. Whenever the traveler misbelieves with Allāh, Allāh will give him some time, then punish him.
- 2) It can be by a hidden punishment, which is a veiling of Allāh to the traveler. That will be by cutting off support from the traveler, leaving him to himself, showing him his own allegations, deeds and will. This punishment, in Ibn 'Atā'illāh's view, is more severe to the traveler than the obvious punishment, because it cuts him off from Allāh without getting him to notice it. To this sort of pervasion and hidden punishment, Ibn 'Atā'illāh says to the traveling mureed: "A sign of a mureed's ignorance is being impolite when punishment is delayed for him. He then says, 'Had there been impoliteness on my part, He would have drawn His support away from me, and have exterminated me.' He may cut off His support from him without getting him to notice it. Cutting off His support may be by stopping an excess of it. He may be placed in extermination without knowing. This may be simply leaving him to his own wishes.
- 3) Pervasion may be by wonders (*karama*), breach of the regular and all other heavenly grants. He states that the traveler may be granted wonders, while he is veiled by them from Allāh Who grants them. Therefore he warns the traveler not to stop where he has been granted karamas (*karamāt*). The real purpose of karama is only to get to know Allāh's capability and singularity and not because Allāh is fulfilling the mureed's desires.

Ibn 'Atā'illāh distinguishes between five kinds of karamāt: visible material karamas, regular and habitual for the Ṣūfī as breathing, and spiritual karamas like knowing Allāh, fear of Him, continuous esteem for Him, hurrying to subordinate to His commands and prohibitions, ascertainment of faith, certainty and surety, and other spiritual Ṣūfī states. He shows that ascertained Ṣūfīs do not pay attention to the breach of the regular and consider spiritual karamas superior to that, and more esteemed.

He warns the traveler of the path from looking for material karamas, as he should better look for refining himself and correcting his behavior. In this respect, he says to him: "Looking for what is latent in you of mistakes, is better than looking for what has been veiled by the unknown."

He also tells him to devalue obvious karamas: "Karama may be granted to one who has not yet become upright." He also says: "Not everyone that has been chosen, has in fact been fully freed (from his mistakes)." He indicates by this that a breath of the habitual may be given to one who has not been uprightly corrected, or to who has not yet been freed from his own desires.

After all this, we still find Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh warning his mureed not to be satisfied with what he is granted of karama, material or otherwise, because they are pervasions. If he is pervaded by them, he will be veiled and cut off from reaching. He indicates to him that whenever any of these karamas or grants occur, he should not stop by them, but he should proceed steadily on his path unobscured by any of them until he reaches his most cherished destination, i.e. Allāh. He says to his mureed in this connection: "Whenever a traveler's desire wants him to stop by what has been revealed to him, tidings of reality will call him: 'What you are asking for is ahead of you.' Whenever secrets of creations are disclosed to him, their realities will always address him. 'We are pervasions. Avoid falling into disbelief.'"

### 8- Commentary:

We have seen how Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh was an ascertained Ṣūfī who guided his mureeds to ethics of behavior on the road to Allāh.

It is noticeable that Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh's short *Maxims* in which he expresses the various ethics of behavior, e.g. destitution, applying means for a living, time, requesting, granting, rejection, sincerity in worship and obedience, inclination and caution from pervasion, are all expression which are accurate and deep, novel and concise, all of which reveal his spiritual maturity, knowledgeable thoroughness and a rare talent in showing the most minute states of the traveler which occur to him physically during his travel.

Ethics of behavior with him, if we look at them from the psychological point of view, are considered an accurate moral expression of intellectual experiences, which he writes after a thorough search within himself during his journey. They are therefore based on a foundation of introspection and show personal tastes which are not easy for non Ṣūfīs to understand in their latent deep meanings. On the contrary, Ṣūfīs, or those who are ready for Ṣūfī states, will find in these statements strong echoes in themselves and a strong penetration through their minds or hearts.

If we look from the moral angle into the ethics of behavior, as viewed by Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh, we find them based on a cautious ethical basis that reveals that the evil commanding nafs is harmful and that bad manners are latent within it. That is why we find that all manners to be applied by the traveler should never get him to rely on himself and the traveler is always warned not to follow his desires, whether obvious or hidden. In addition, ethics of behavior instruct the traveler how he should behave. Thus, they lay down norms for behavior or in other words, draw for the traveler the general rules he should follow in his travel. From a metaphysical point of view, all ethics of behavior are based on three principles:

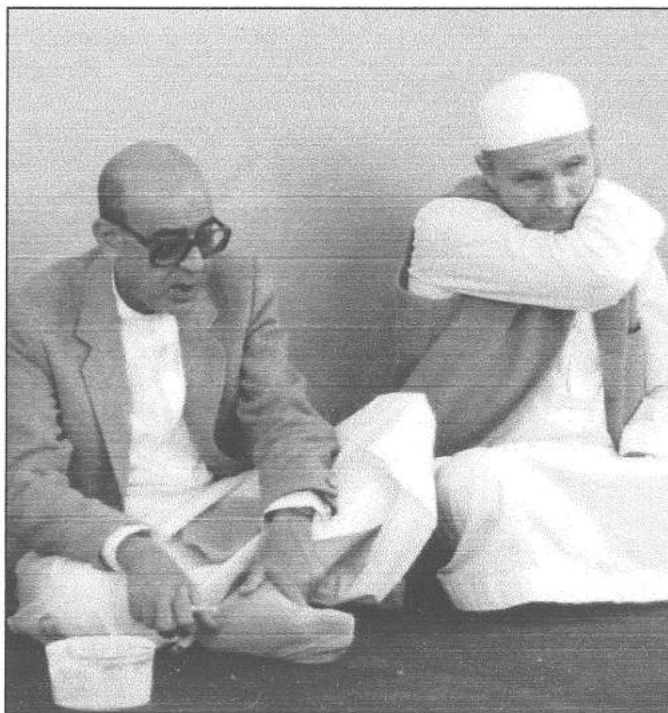
- 1) Allāh's predestination for man
- 2) Absence of human will in relation to Allāh's will
- 3) Man is not the creator of his deeds, obedience, and sin. Allāh is the Creator.

That is why we see Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh obliges the traveler to be without self direction in his destitution or earning, and that he should be submitting always to the command of his time. He should not introduce anything by his own will, and should be sincere in his deeds and worship. He should be cautious

against pervasion emanating from his personal desires. Ibn 'Ata'illāh revolves all ethics of behavior on one pole, i.e. dropping self direction and will in faith and fate and Allāh's predestination for man.

In addition, ethics of behavior show to us how our Shaykh expresses the relation between man and Allāh. He states that Allāh is the Supreme Existence which the traveler yearns to reach. This supreme existence, Allāh, is the willing by His will, which is unbounded by anything. All existence submits to Him and consequently there is no room to say that Allāh's acts are caused by anything from man. We have also seen him denying that a traveler's deeds and worship could be reasons for the reach to Allāh or that the traveler's petition would be a reason for Allāh's grants. We also saw him repeating his advice to the traveler not to rely on his worship or seeing it coming out of himself or by necessity, thus getting him to reach Allāh as he must fully believe in the overall heavenly will in front of which human will vanishes completely.

A lot of the ethics of behavior is based on indications from the Qur'ān. Our Shaykh did his best to quote the Qur'ān to strengthen his *Maxims*, because he wanted to confirm that the content of his maxims of Ṣūfī meanings is driven from the Qur'ān and that they coincide with it.



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## CHAPTER 5: THE NAFS BETWEEN STATIONS AND STATES

“Know that the stations of certainty are nine: tawba, abstention (zuhd), patience (sabr), gratitude (shukr), fear (khawf), hope (rajaa'), contentment (rida), reliance (tawakkul) on Allāh, and love (hubb). None of these will be correct except through dropping self direction and choice.”

“Good deeds are results of good states. Good states are results of ascertainment in stations.”

“Allāh's grants often come abruptly in order that people cannot allege their occurrence by their own preparedness.”

**1- What are Stations and States?**

**2- Stations: Tawba, Abstinence, Patience, Gratitude, Fear, Hope, Reliance on Allāh, Contentment, Love, and Dropping Self Direction**

**3- States: Occurrence of States, Delight, Delight and Depression, Annihilation and Survival, Categories of Travelers with Relation to States, States and Dropping Self Direction.**

### 1- What are stations and states?

After the traveler performs the general ethics of behavior on the path, he has to correct the stations (degrees) of his behavior and his different states and ascend in them without fearing being cut off from the reach of Allāh.

Ascent in stations and states, in our Shaykh's view and as has been mentioned before, is the fourth and last stage in nafs-jihad and it is the strife from which the traveler arrives at a sure and ascertained knowledge of Allāh through his taste. Stations, with him as they are with other Ṣūfis, are the various stages on the path to Allāh. They are the states which settle down in the traveler's nafs due to his various jihad exercises. It is said for example that a traveler is in the station of tawba if he has really striven against sins and passions, gotten rid of them, conquered their motives, and become the master of his nafs in this field.

The traveler ascends in stations through jihad of the nafs until he completes all stations. These stations, in a modern psychological sense, are personal emotional states that manifest the psychological balance which the traveler has achieved by his behavior.

Ṣūfis have agreed that a traveler cannot be ascertained in a station unless he makes exercise for it. It will be his own earning. Al Qushairi said: “A station is the place in which a traveler is ascertained with what he has performed of ethics, deeds, and endurance. Each man's station is where he is in these conditions and what nafs exercise he is concerned with.”

As for states, they are conditions which overcome the traveler without his working for them. Al Qushairi defines a state as a meaning that comes to the heart (mind) without any effort from the traveler, work or earning. Merriment, sadness, depression, delight, yearning, embarrassment, and esteem are all states that come to the traveler during his journey, but they do not last. Al Junaid defines a state as “An abrupt feeling that falls on the heart, but they do not last.” Stations and states, as Ṣūfis see them, are interlinking, i.e. he who is ascertained in a station can experience states, and a man of states can ascend from them to stations.

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh states that the stations of traveling are nine: tawba, abstinence, patience, gratitude, fear and hope, contentment, reliance on Allāh, and love. His classification of stations differs from Al Toussi's classification of them. Al Toussi states that stations are seven: tawba, scruple, abstinence, poverty, patience, reliance on Allāh, and contentment. Al Ghazali differs from both Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh and



Al Toussi. He finds stations as ten: tawba, patience, gratitude, hope, fear, poverty, abstinence, singularization, reliance on Allāh, and love.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh applies his doctrine of dropping self direction and will in the field of stations. He does not see them as a gain of the traveler’s will, because if they were so, man would be having a will to which deeds could be in reality related. That is against his doctrine which abnegates human will and which believes in Allāh who is the creator of man’s deeds.

In addition, he states that no station will be correct unless it is based on dropping self direction and planning. He says in this connection to the traveler: “Know that the stations of certainty are nine: tawba, abstinence, patience, gratitude, fear, hope, contentment, reliance on Allāh, and love. None of these stations will be correct except by dropping self direction and choice.”

As for states, ‘Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh tells us about some of them like delight, depression, merriment, separation, gathering, absence, presence, sobriety, intoxication, annihilation, and lasting. They come over the traveler and their presence assures him that he really has no will or planning with Allāh.

We shall give in the following paragraphs a picture of the traveler in between his behavior and states as described by our Shaykh which indicates the development of the traveler’s life of devotion and how he can reach to ethical perfection. That will be achieved by the traveler’s trial to live in full harmony with fate while he is in his station. This picture also reveals the nature of his emotional life, and how he should release his feelings which are subjected to his various emotional states. It is a picture which Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh paints through his doctrine, by the color of dropping self direction and planning.

## 2- stations

**1- Tawba** (repentance, and determination not to sin again) is the first Ṣūfī station, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view. No station after it will be accepted without achieving it. A traveler should request tawba from Allāh at all times because Allāh has called him to ask for it in His saying: “Make tawba to Allāh all of you believers so that you may succeed.” He also says: “Allāh loves those who often repent and those who purify themselves.”

The way to tawba, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, is contemplation and seclusion. If a traveler wishes to be deeply rooted in this station, he should revise all his deeds during his day. If he finds obedience, he should thank Allāh, and if he finds disobedience, he should reprimand himself, ask for Allāh’s forgiveness, and return to Him in repentance.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh shows that the station of tawba is the most important station because all other stations depend on it and need it. He also sees that as signs of potential reaching to the end, the correction of the beginnings, of which the most important place is tawba. He goes on to say that correcting the station of tawba for the traveler is caused by the grace of Allāh. He says to the traveler: “If Allāh perfects the station of tawba for you, this will be more beneficial to you than getting you to behold seventy thousand unknown things which get you to lose tawba.”

Among the most important aids that help the traveler to be ascertained with tawba, as Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh sees, is the belief in the absoluteness of Allāh’s will, and that it surrounds and covers everything and that nothing can escape it. When a traveler firmly believes so, he will never despair of getting out of lust and neglectfulness to obedience, by Allāh’s will. He says to the traveler: “He that finds it unlikely that Allāh will get him out of his passions and neglectfulness, will be belittling Allāh’s capability...Allāh is capable of everything.”

What also helps in attaining tawba is thinking well of Allāh. If a traveler falls in a sin, he should not think that it is too big to be pardoned by Allāh, and so he becomes desperate of tawba. If the traveler really knows his Sustainer’s attributes of patience, bounty, grace, and forgiveness, he will find his sin quite tiny, however big it might have been. He will then repent and ask for Allāh’s forgiveness and

will not be desperate about reaching to Him. In this connection, he says to the traveler: “Your folly should not appear so big to you as to get you to abandon thinking well of Allāh. He that knows his well his Sustainer, will find his sin tiny in relation to his forgiveness.” He also says, urging the traveler not to become desperate when he makes a sin, because he might have been doomed for it, “If you make a sin, it should not be the last sin for which you have been doomed.” He that is ascertained in the stations of tawba must also be ascertained in dropping self direction and planning. A repenter must abandon both self direction and planning as he repents from sins and folly of all sorts, because they are worse than sins and folly.

As tawba literally means a return to Allāh from all that He does not like for the traveler, and as self direction is not liked by Allāh because it implies togetherness with Him Who is the only One that directs, it is a disbelief of the grants of Allāh to the traveler, and because Allāh does not like disbelief for his slaves, a traveler must consequently abandon self direction.

A traveler’s tawba from his sins will not be complete, if remnants of self direction are still latent in him. In this case, he will be entirely unaware of Allāh’s good intention for him and his predestination.

When a traveler is assured in the station of tawba and that he has fully fulfilled its dues, he will ascend to the following station which is abstinence.

## 2- Abstinence

In Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, abstinence is of two kinds: obvious abstinence, like abstinence from the excess of halal foods, dress, and other halal worldly pleasures; and a hidden internal abstinence such as abstinence in fame, leadership, and other moral things also related to living.

The motive for abstinence is contemplation: if a traveler contemplates life and finds it a place for others, and finds it as a source for sadness and hardship, he will abstain from it. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says in this connection to the traveler: “He has made it a place for others and a source for the existence of hardship in order to get you to abstain from it.” He also says to him, disparaging worldliness: “Do not be astonished at the fall of hardships on you, as long as you are in this world. It does not produce except what befits it and what is due to its nature.” He also says, urging the traveler not to trust its beauties but to work for the later life: “When the light of certainty shines for you, you will see the hereafter nearer to you as you travel to it, and you will see the beauties of this life lying on annihilation.”

The station of abstinence obliges the traveler to exterminate the love of life and he would envy its people for what they are involved in. In this connection, he says to the traveler: “You will be utterly ignorant if you envy people of the world for what they have been given or occupy your mind with what they have. If you do so, you will be more ignorant than they, because they are occupied with what they have been given, and you will be occupied with what you have not been given.”

Among the most obvious characteristics of abstinence, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, is that the abstainer should feel indifferent. He should not rejoice when life comes to him, or despair if it turns away from him, because if he rejoices for the presence of something and is depressed for its loss, he will be a slave to it. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says to the traveler:

“You should not be sorry for losing anything and not be happy for the presence of anything.  
He who is pleased when he finds something and is sad when he loses it  
will be ascertaining his slave hood to this thing,  
for its presence pleased him and its loss saddened him.”

How can a traveler achieve this particular characteristic of abstinence, which is indifference? Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh replies that the traveler should not rejoice in attaining worldly joy. In fact, this is extremely difficult. Who among people will not rejoice when life fulfills his desires, or gives him its means? A

traveler however must ascend, as much as he can, over people's ordinary joy when they fulfill their wishes. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says, urging the traveler to stand firmly and be indifferent: "If you decrease the value of what gets you to rejoice, what gets you to be sad will decrease."

Abstinence, as our Shaykh sees it, does not imply that the abstainer must be poor and not own anything of the means of life, but abstinence can be present together with the presence of these means. A sign of an earner's abstinence is not to be occupied with what he owns, and a sign of a destitute's abstinence is the absence of muddle in thoughts and means. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says: "An abstainer in life has two signs, a sign in its loss and a sign in its presence. The sign of life's presence will be his neglect of it, and the sign of losing it, will be peace from its muddle. The neglect will be a gratitude for its presence and peace will be a gratitude for its loss."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh then plunges more deeply into analyzing the sources which will motivate the traveler to abstinence. He tells us of two motives: one that is related with a complete belief of the hereafter, meaning that if a traveler believes in meeting Allāh in the hereafter and that communion will be near, he will disdain life and uses it as a bridge to cross over to Allāh. The other motive is based on a metaphysical foundation for the interpretation of existence. If the traveler believes that real existence is only for Allāh and that the whole universe has no real existence and that its apparent existence is only illusory, he will abstain in all that does not really exist. He will even ascend over abstinence to non-abstinence, because what does not exist does not qualify for abstinence.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh refers to the first motive by saying: "If faith is assured (in one's heart) inheritance will be abstinence in life, because faith in Allāh provides full conviction of meeting Him. Your knowledge that all that are to come are really very near, should convince you of the nearness of meeting Allāh. This will yield in you abstinence in the world."

As for the second motive, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says: "As a matter of real fact, any abstainer in the world is really confusing its existence...confirming that you are abstaining something is a confirmation of the existence of this subject. Also your saying that you are freed from something is a confirmation of the existence of that subject.... In this respect we have composed a small poem to one of my friends called Ḥassan (ḥassan in Arabic means good).

"It is ḥassan if you abandon the entire creation.  
It is ḥassan if you are not occupied with it.  
When you understand, you will know  
You only abandon what exists.  
When you witness other than Him  
Know it is only illusion and heart distraction."

Our Shaykh applies his doctrine of dropping self direction and planning to the field of abstinence, saying that the station s of abstinence will not be correct for the traveler, unless he entirely gets out of self direction. He explains it saying: "Abstinence will not be correct except by abandoning self direction, because you are asked really to abstain and abandon your self direction because abstinence is two fold: obvious abstinence and hidden internal abstinence. Obvious abstinence is in the area of abundance of halal food, dress, etc, and the hidden abstinence is in fame and leadership. Also hidden abstinence includes abstinence in planning with Allāh."

The station of patience follows the station of abstinence, as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh states:

### 3 -patience:

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh divides patience into three kinds: patience with what is prohibited,  
patience within duties, and  
patience with planning and choice.

As the one ascertained in patience refrains from what Allāh does not like for him, and since planning and choice are not liked for him by Allāh, those who are in the station of patience must abandon self direction and choice, otherwise their patience will not be correct.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh relates to us that patience with taboos is a patience with human desires, and patience with duties is patience with the necessities of slavehood. The greatest need of these necessities is dropping self direction by the traveler.

For great Ṣūfis, there is an additional and special kind of patience: they are patient with concealing the secrets that are revealed to them. They do not rely on creations, they do not stop with lights in fear of getting veiled by them from Allāh. They bear the harm of people to them, are steadfast with fate, stick to goodness and all other attributes of the traveler.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh believes that the ascertainment of the traveler of the station of patience only occurs by sheer heavenly attention. If Allāh wishes to strengthen the traveler in meeting His examinations, he will cover him with His luminous attributes, so while destiny takes its course, Allāh’s light will precede it, so the traveler will be with Allāh and not left to himself. He consequently accepts destiny with whatever it bears of hardship or pain. As long as the traveler has full faith in fate, is witnessing the appropriateness of Allāh’s choice, His grace, kindness, and grants, and so long as he is dropping self direction and choice, he will not be upset with the presence of calamities and distress, but he will endure Allāh’s decrees and will be certain that Allāh’s kindness is latent in his fate. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh shows the means which help the traveler to be patient and how they are grants from Allāh for those whom He cherishes. “Know that if Allāh wishes to strengthen a slave against His judgment on him, He covers him with lights of His attributes so fate falls preceded by His light, and so the slave will be with Allāh and not with himself. He will be strong enough to bear their stress and hardship. What really gets Ṣūfis to bear His judgment is the flow of heavenly illumination on them. You can also say, that what helps them to bear His judgment is that the door of understanding will be opened for them. You can also say that what helps them to bear His judgment is their beholding of the appropriate choice. You can also say that what gets them to bear what has befallen them is their knowledge that He sees them. You can also say that what gets them to endure His deeds is His revelation of His bounty and beauty for them. You can also say, what gets them to endure His judgment is their knowledge that patience yields contentment. You can also say, what gets them to accept fate is the unveiling of veils for them. You can also say that what helps them to bear the weight of orders is the revelation of the secrets for His deeds to them. You can also say that what gets them to endure His judgment is their knowledge of what has been instituted in them of His kindness and support. These are ten reasons which aid the slave to be patient, stand upright in front of his Master’s destiny, and be strong when orders are passed on him. Allāh is the giver and provider of all these by His sheer grace to those who are within His special circle of attention.”

Patience therefore, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, is not the earning of a slave; it is a sheer endowment by Allāh, with which He endows those who are within His special circle of attention. In addition, patience should be based entirely on free faith in fate and dropping self direction and choice.

We have also seen how Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s doctrine of faith in fate and dropping self direction is active in formulating his Ṣūfī views about one of the most important stations on the travel to Allāh,

According to Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s classification of the stations of travel, the station of gratitude follows the station of patience:

#### **4- gratitude:**

Gratitude, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, is of three kinds: gratitude of the tongue, which means acknowledgment of bliss: Allāh says: “Of the bliss of your sustainer, you should speak.” Of the gratitude of the organs, which are working for Allāh’s obedience, Allāh says: “Work for the folks of



Dawūd in gratitude”; and the gratitude of the interior is an attestation that Allāh alone is the provider of bliss and that any bliss is from Him alone. Allāh says: “Any bliss that is worth you, is from Allāh.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh states that there is a kind of gratitude for each man according to his state. If a man is knowledgeable, his gratitude to Allāh for what he has of knowledge is guidance of people. If he is rich, his gratitude in this case will be giving to people and looking after their needs. If he has fame and authority, his gratitude to Allāh will be by pushing away harm and distress from those who come within the circle of his authority.

From Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s words about gratitude there emanates to us a picture of how a good society should be. He says that it is a duty for scholars to guide people. This implies that they should avail people of their knowledge. It also implies that knowledge should not be the scholars’ monopoly but that it should be shared among all people, who benefit from it in refining their manners and improving their lives.

Also our Ṣūfī Shaykh sees that the rich must be generous to the poor, giving them of what they own. If the duty of the rich in society is to help the poor, the duty of sultans, rulers, and leaders is to drive away from people all harm, and they should ascertain social justice among the populace.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh accordingly understands the station of gratitude comprehensively and in a way which reveals that he was not among those Ṣūfis who pull themselves out of society for worship and contemplation and consequently become ignorant of the life of the society in which they live. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh sees an interior and an exterior in gratitude. The exterior of gratitude is the traveler’s subordination to Allāh’s orders and refraining from his prohibitions. Its interior is the beholding of Allāh’s bliss and attestation of it.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh confirms the traveler’s need and obligation to gratitude for Allāh’s blessings. This gratitude will be a reason for them to last and be augmented. He says to the traveler: “He who is not grateful for blessings, exposes himself to their loss. He who is grateful for them, will find them.” He also says to some of his friends in Alexandria around this meaning: “...Allāh has guaranteed an excess for the grateful without any limitation. Allāh says: ‘If you are thankful, I shall give you more.’ If He has guaranteed excess over what He has given to them, how can He not get His previous grants to last with them? He that likes to keep them should tie them up in order not to leave them to run away, so tie up the blessings of Allāh for you by your gratitude to Him.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh warns the traveler not to be unaware of the presence of Allāh’s bliss. He should fear Allāh’s taking His gifts back so that he knows them after they are lost. In this, he says to the traveler: “He that does not see blessings when they are present, will know them when they are lost.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh shows that as a sign of the traveler’s politeness, is that he should always be thankful to Allāh, so that when bliss comes to him, his delight with it should not get him to forget thanking its giver, otherwise that will be an indication of his insincerity in his slavehood to Allāh. He says to the traveler: “The flow of bliss on you should not take you by surprise as that you forget performing your duties of gratitude, otherwise you will be demoted.”

Yet, what will a traveler do when any person gives him something? Our Shaykh replies that the traveler should be thankful to people because that is an order of shari’a. He should however know that it is Allāh alone who grants and not people, because of Allāh’s singularity of granting in His kingdom. Allāh however wants that His grants be passed through the hands of His slaves in order to get them to reach to whoever He chooses for His own attention. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says in one of his maxims: “If the eye of the heart sees that it is only Allāh alone who grants, shari’a provides that you must thank his creatures.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh, as usual, does not forget to apply his doctrine of dropping self direction in the station of gratitude. He shows to us that the meaning of gratitude is that man should not disobey Allāh in

gratitude for Allāh’s grants to him. As mind is Allāh’s greatest bliss for man, a traveler must not therefore disobey Allāh through planning with this mind. Without the mind, man cannot plan with Allāh. Material things cannot plan because they have no mind to look into potential results and get concerned with them. Consequently, gratitude to Allāh for the bliss of the mind, necessitates dropping self direction and planning with Allāh. The station of gratitude will not be correct for a traveler if he still has in his heart yearnings for planning and willing.

After the station of gratitude comes the station of fear and hope:

### **5- the station of fear and hope:**

Fear and hope, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, are two stations on the path to Allāh and not states as other Ṣūfis think. They both share the traveler’s nafs on his journey to Allāh.

A traveler will be in the station of fear when he becomes afraid that Allāh may take away from him what he has of states and stations, due to his knowledge that Allāh’s judgment is overwhelming and that His will is dominant. If He wants to take them from him, He will do it and He is not to be asked for what He does, but people are asked. In one of his petitions, our Shaykh says: “My Allāh, your overwhelming judgment and dominance will have not left anything for him that has states or him that speaks.” Al Rondi explains this statement, saying: “Understanding this meaning obliges the slave to be in the station of fear and to be ascertained in it. If he is well spoken and in a favorable state, he still cannot be certain of the judgment, as the True overrules everything and His will dominates everything.”

Ṣūfis’ fear of losing these states and stations is the fear of the elite. It is different from the fear of commoners, who fear Allāh’s punishment when they sin and fear fire to burn their bodies. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says: “...commoners have not pierced with the eye of their hearts to witness the grants of the True on them like faith, Islam, knowledge, singularity, and love. They know that Allāh has threatened the disobedient with His punishment, so they fear sinning which will be a cause for punishment falling on them. Their fear is due to their self love; they fear being punished by Allāh. As for the elite (the chosen), and grace to them, they work for maintaining themselves in order to go to Him without being contaminated or unclean.”

A traveler’s fear of losing his states and stations should however obsess him. He should never lose hope in Allāh. Whenever he is afraid, he should know that beyond his fear are the attributes of Who is never to be desperate of His benevolence and mercy. He should know that Allāh has only frightened him to bring him to His company. Fear therefore should be a motive for hope.

Our Shaykh also shows to us that as another motive for hope, the traveler ought to consider grants, endowments, and bliss to him. Here his hope grows and he will think well of Allāh. Yet, as a traveler carries on thinking of his disobedience and offences, he will not get out of fear’s range. In this context, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says to the traveler: “If you want Him to open the door of hope to you, behold what you do for Him.”

The most important condition for hope, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, is that it should be accompanied with deeds; otherwise, it will just be wishful thinking. Desiring is contrary to slavehood and what it requires of dropping self direction. A traveler should not therefore be negative in his behavior, but he has always to perform acts of obedience and worship for proximity to Allāh. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says in one of his maxims which is very deep and comprehensive:

“Hope is always accompanied with work,  
otherwise it will be wishful thinking.”

Is not his maxim in the meaning of hope worthy to be made use of by people in their day-to-day life? Anyone of us often reverts to himself and wishes for many things. His time is lost in wistfulness, but he never attains any target. If he occupies his time in getting work done instead, he will reach, or at least he will be contributing to reaching what he had desired, without wasting time.

Hope, with our Shaykh and so should it be with all people, must be accompanied with continuous hard work to achieve what one wants to get. Hope, therefore, must be a motive for positive and productive work, and not used as a motive for escape, failure, and losing time in false illusions and imagination.

Hope also, as Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh sees, motivates fear. An ascertained traveler in the station of hope is normally afraid of the heavenly unseen and fears that what he is experiencing of hope might be a sort of test for him or a veil for him from Allāh. In this connection, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says: “When Ṣūfis hope, they fear. They fear His unknown judgment lying behind their hope. They also fear that what is revealed to them of hope, could be a test for their mureeds: will they stop with the exterior of hope, or will they penetrate to what is hidden in destiny? Hope therefore motivates fear.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says in one of his petitions about his own ascertainment of hope and fear, that they follow each other within himself: “My Allāh, my hope in You never ends even when I disobey You and my fear does not leave me even when I obey You.”

He goes on to indicate that the stations of hope and fear will not be correct unless by dropping self direction, as with all other stations of behavior. If a traveler is ascertained with the station of fear, it means the burden of fear has penetrated his heart. Is he is so, he will never be able in real fact to plan or direct himself. In other words, fear of Allāh and self direction never combine.

In the same way, if the traveler is ascertained in the station of hope, it means that his heart has been filled with Allāh’s delight and that he is occupied with dealing in deeds with Allāh, because hope must be accompanied with continuous work. Will therefore there be any time left for him in which he hopes to plan for anything with Allāh?

In Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s classification of the stations for behavior, the stations of contentment and reliance on Allāh, follow the stations of fear and hope:

#### **6- stations of contentment and reliance on Allāh:**

Contentment, as Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh sees it, is the full acceptance of Allāh’s saying: “Allāh has been content with them and they were content with Him”, and to the Prophet’s saying, peace and blessings be upon him,: “He feels the taste of faith, who is content with Allāh.”

This prophetic hadith explains to us that who is not assured by contentment will not feel the taste of faith. His belief will be like an image which has no life in it or that faith will be an outer faith and not an inner one. He that is assured by contentment will be content with Allāh as his Sustainer. He will submit to Him, subside in his judgment and get himself subordinated to Him. Here he finds happiness and the comfort of submission. When a traveler is content with Allāh as the Sustainer, Allāh will be content with him. Allāh says: “Allāh has been content with them and they are content with Him.”

This sort of concept of contentment, with Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh and other Ṣūfis, is based entirely on an Islamic foundation which refutes what is sometimes said, that contentment with Ṣūfi Muslims is an Indian thought in its origin.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh does not consider contentment as an earning by the traveler. He relates it to heavenly attention. In this he says: “Contentment with Allāh can only be together with understanding, understanding can only be with illumination, illumination can only be with proximity and proximity will never be attained, except by heavenly attention....”

The traveler's ascertainment in the station of contentment is in itself an ascertainment in the station of reliance on Allāh, and therefore there is a very strong link between contentment and reliance on Allāh. As our Shaykh says: "He who is content with Allāh's judgment, submitting to his fate, will always be subordinating to Allāh in everything, relying on Him, sure of the arrival of His benefits to him. This is reliance on Allāh itself. The motive for the station of reliance on Allāh is full faith in the fact that everything is in the hand of Allāh. Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says in the *Maxims*: "He who is sure that Allāh loves him, will be very sincere in asking Him. He who knows well that everything is in the hand of Allāh, reliance on Allāh will be his lot." This saying of Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh refers to the Qur'ānic ayah: "For Him, everything returns. So worship Him and rely on Him."

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh also shows that the stations of reliance on Allāh and contentment will not be correct except by dropping self direction. In this respect, he says: "Self direction contradicts the station of reliance on Allāh because he that relies on Allāh will submit to Him, rely on Him in everything. This necessitates dropping self direction and subsiding in fate. Dropping self direction in the stations of contentment and reliance on Allāh is more visibly needed than in other station... self direction also contradicts the station of contentment and that is self evident, because he who is content has already been sufficed by Allāh's predestination. How can then he plan with Him when he has already accepted Allāh's previous planning for him? Do you not know that the light of contentment washes the toil of planning from their hearts? He who is content with Allāh, is delighted by the light of contentment and does not need therefore any other planning by himself..."

In the classification of stations by Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh, the station of love follows the station of contentment and reliance on Allāh, and it is the last of all stations:

### 7- the station of love:

Love, with Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh, is among the most important stations of certainty, but he does not consider it the most perfect station with which a traveler is to be ascertained on his travel on the path to Allāh. The station of contentment, in his view, is better because the content is freer from the desires of his nafs and free even from requesting the fulfillment of any desire. As for the content, all conditions involving him will be alike, whether they are accompaniment, abandonment, proximity, or extremity, because he is content with Allāh in all of them. The lover is not so, because he desires a continuity of the company and witnessing his beloved. He is with what he likes for himself. Therefore, his station will be inferior to the station of contentment. In this respect, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says to the traveler: "Know that love is among the noblest stations of certainty to the extent that pious people differ on which is more perfect, the station of love, or the station of contentment." In our view, the station of contentment is more perfect because the dominance of love may be over the lover's capacity to bear, and his longing may overcome him, so he may ask for what does not befit his station. Do you not see that the lover always wants a continuous beholding of his beloved, but the content will always be satisfied, whether he beholds or even if he is veiled? The lover desires continuous company but the content is content with Allāh, whether He draws him near to Him, or cuts him off because he is not with what he desired for himself, but he is with what Allāh wishes for him. A lover always wants a continuous discourse with his beloved and the content does not yearn for anything. We have a poem in this respect which says:

"In the past, I used to ask for their company,  
and when knowledge came to me and my ignorance vanished,  
I was ascertained that a slave had no demands.  
If they draw near, that will be due to their bounty.  
If they go far away, that will be due to their justice.



If they make themselves visible,

They only show their attributes.

If they veil me, their veiling will be esteemed.”

When Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh sees the station of contentment as superior to the station of love, he differs from Al Ghazali, who sees the station of love as the most perfect and highest station. He considers contentment as one of its fruits. This can be derived from his saying: “...love for Allāh is the extreme end of stations and the highest step. There will be no station beyond love, except what can be one of its fruits, or one of its satellites, like yearning, delight, contentment, etc., and there is no station before the station of love, except what can be considered an introduction to it, like tawba, patience, abstinence, etc....”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s preference of the station of contentment to the station of love is only a result of his master idea that directs his Ṣūfī doctrine, i.e. dropping self direction and planning. He sees that the station of contentment, which implies the traveler’s contentment with all commands of Allāh and which, by necessity, calls for dropping of self direction, is more perfect than the station of love, in which the traveler may be stationary with what he desired for himself of being in the company of Allāh or of any of his desired personal. We therefore see him indicating that among the most needed requirements for the station of love, is that the lover should be free from asking for compensation. In other words, the traveler should be free in his love from wishing a fulfillment of his personal desires, because this can be a sign of self will, which is discouraged in the travel to Allāh in relation to what he should always do in dropping his will and wishes.

He says in one of his maxims:

“He will not be a lover who asks for compensation from his beloved or who asks Him for anything for himself. Your lover gives you and he is not your lover who asks you to give him.”

Consequently, a traveler will not perfect his station of love, in Ibn Ata’Illah’s view, unless in his love, he is ascertained with dropping self direction, planning, and is abandoning entirely his personal desires. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says here: “Self direction also contradicts the station of love, because the lover should be consumed in the love of his beloved... the lover has no time to plan with Allāh, because his love for Allāh occupies him. Some people have said: He that has tasted a drop of sincere love for Allāh, it will distract him from anything else.”

### **8- stations and dropping self direction:**

We have been told before of the nine stations of the path to Allāh in which the traveler rises from one to the other. These are tawba, abstinence, patience, gratitude, fear and hope, contentment and reliance on Allāh, and love. We have also seen how each of them will not be perfect without dropping self direction, and will be perfected by so doing in it.

Indeed, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s trying to base all stations of behavior on a foundation of dropping self direction cannot be considered free from over doing, because a traveler’s ascent through his nafs-jihad cannot coincide with dropping self direction. Ascent in stations is itself a voluntary action which is done by the traveler. Take tawba as an example, which is the traveler’s abandonment of his sins and repressing his passions. It is an act which clearly shows the presence of self will. How can a repent stop laboring in abandoning sin? In this case, he abandons his deeds for tawba, which is really strange.

If Ṣūfis have agreed that a station is what is earned by the slave and are told that: “States are grants, but stations are gains”, and that “stations are gained by making efforts”, our Shāykh does not agree with them, that stations are gained by the traveler, because if he admits that, he will admit that there is real existence of human will, and that it has an entry into the fulfillment of ascertaining stations, which contradicts his doctrine of dropping self direction and planning. That is why we have seen him

introducing heavenly attention when speaking about stations of tawba, patience, and contentment, into their spheres in a way that an accurate researcher would understand that Ibn 'Ata' Illāh does not see stations as gains by the slave, but that they are grants from Allāh with which He endows whomever He likes of travelers.

If stations do occur, as our Shaykh sees, by sheer heavenly attention, why then should a traveler practice nafs-jihad in obliging himself for tawba, abstinence, patience, etc.?

Had Ibn 'Ata' Illāh went on to say that man's will has an entry in ascertaining stations, yet as an act of politeness he should not see them related to himself, but to the will of Allāh, there would have been no contradiction in this respect.

It seems, however, that Ibn 'Ata' Illāh does not like this interpretation, but that he wished to proceed in his doctrine of dropping self direction till the end. He considered that stations of the journey, which we find as real manifestations for the traveler's will, are all related to Allāh's will, which has chosen the traveler to attain them. He clearly shows that his doctrine in its essence is a doctrine of predestination which does not admit the presence of any free will for man.

Now that we have seen how a traveler ascends in stations through dropping his self direction and will, as seen by Ibn 'Ata' Illāh, and how he should practice rules of behavior in those stations, helping to get him to live in free harmony with fate and Allāh's will, we now move to draw a picture for the traveler with respect to the states the flow over him, which will show us how the traveler should also be without will, because the states that he encounters all come from Allāh and are acts of His own will and grace.

### 3- states

#### 1- the flow of states:

Many states overlap with stations. Among them, as Ibn 'Ata' Illāh has also said, are the states of delight, depression, merriment, separation, communion, absence, presence, sobriety, intoxication, annihilation, and existence.

These states are results of assured stations. Ibn 'Ata' Illāh shows us that being assured with stations will provide good states for the traveler, and that good states will result in good deeds. To this interrelation between stations, states, and deeds, he says in one of his maxims: "Good deeds are results of good states. Good states are results of being assured in stations."

States flow on the traveler without any will from himself for them; they are sheer heavenly grants. They differ according to the difference of *wajidat* (visions) which fall on the heart of the traveler, bearing spiritual secrets that fill states. There is a vision which brings delight, a vision that brings depression, and a vision that yields merriment, etc. Because those visions that flow on the traveler are varied and numerous, the traveler's deeds and states will also be varied. Ibn 'Ata' Illāh says in this reference: "The nature of deeds differ because of the varied visions of states."

Ibn 'Ata' Illāh believes that Allāh gets these states to flow on the traveler to get him to draw nearer to Him. He says: "He gets the vision to flow on you, to draw you nearer to Him." He also explains that the wisdom in getting them to fall on the traveler is to get him to be freed of the others to which he might have subsided due to his desires and his planning for himself. In this respect, he says in one of his maxims: "He brought the vision to you, to take you away from the hands of "others" and free you from the slavery of creations. He brought the vision to you, to get you out of the jail of your existence into the space of witnessing Him."

Our Shaykh indicates that the flow of (tidings) on the traveler distracts his habits and the rashness of his nafs, which means that there is a moral practical function for states: he says to the traveler: "When heavenly *waridat* flow on you, they distract your habits." "When kings enter a village, they ruin it."

He also says to the traveler: “The tiding comes from the Dominant, consequently nothing will ever stand against it without being destroyed. “We throw truth on the fake, it suppresses it and so it dies away.”

The value of the tiding, as our Shāykh sees, is its fruit, which is of the purification of the nafs, not the fulfillment of personal desires. He says to the traveler: “Do not esteem a tiding of which you doubt its fruit. The function of the cloud is not to rain, but to produce harvest.”

A traveler should not also be proud or vain with tidings so as to lean on them and forget their Giver, Who is Allāh. A sign of his leaning on them is his request to get them to stay while they are present. This will not be an act of politeness on the path. His politeness should be in destitution of all personal gains. He says to the traveler: “Do not ask for getting tidings to last after they have already spread their lights and yielded their secrets. You have all the abundance for you in Allāh who will make you in no need of anything, while nothing can ever make you in no need of Him.”

If the traveler corrects his behavior during the fall of the *waridat*, they will yield to him their good fruits in the various states to which he shall encounter. We shall detail those states as follows:

## 2- delight:

To feel delighted by the company of Allāh is a station which is granted to the traveler by Allāh. Delight in the company of Allāh gets the traveler not to feel delight in people.

A traveler will not be ascertained with the state of delight, in our Shāykh’s view, except by secluding himself from people in isolation. He says to the traveler: “If you get isolated from people, He will open for you the door of delight with Him. Walis have conquered themselves by isolation and seclusion so they heard from Allāh and got delighted with Him. If you want to clean the mirror of your heart from impurities, abandon what Ṣūfis abandoned, which is the delight with people.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh also says that delight with Allāh does not occur to the traveler except after he has alienated himself from people. In one of his maxims, he says: “When He alienates you from His creations, know that He wants to open for you the door of delight with Him.”

As it is Allāh who opens the door of delight to the traveler, the state of delight comes by the sheer attention of Allāh and the traveler’s will has therefore no entry to achieve it. Listen to Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh supplicating his Sustainer and indicating that gnosis, love, and delight, and only by His sheer grace:

“You have illuminated the hearts of your walis so they knew You and singularized You. You have banished the “others” from the hearts of Your beloveds, so they loved You alone and did not resort to others, but to You. You have delighted them, when creations alienated them....”

Delight with the company of Allāh, in his view, goes together with the station of love for Allāh. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says also in his supplication: “You have got your lovers to taste the sweetness of Your delight, so they stood petitioning to You.”

## 3- depression and merriment:

Depression and merriment are also states that flow on the traveler on his path to Allāh.

Depression and merriment are two successive psychological states. In depression, the traveler feels worry, sadness, and pain, while in merriment, he feels joy, peace, and contentment.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says that a traveler sometimes gets depressed and sometimes gets merry in spite of himself, i.e. during them, he is without will or planning. How can he produce any of them, while states flow on him by the sheer will of Allāh? Allāh may get him out of them by His own will so that the traveler should not resort to either and should stay with Allāh. In this respect, he says to the traveler:

“He has delighted you in order not to leave you in depression  
and depressed you in order that you not rely on merriment.  
He delivered you from both of them in order for you not to be for anything but Him.”

In merriment, as our Shaykh sees, there is a gain for the nafs because of the presence of joy. Depression is not so there is no gain for the nafs in it. He says in the *Maxims* “The nafs finds gain in merriment by the presence of joy, and it has no gain in depression.”

As there is gain for the nafs in merriment, and absence of it in depression, knowers, as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says, fear the state of merriment because they fear everything in which there is gain for the nafs. On the contrary, in the state of depression, they see themselves near to safety because they find no gain for the nafs. If this is so clear, we shall understand his maxim in which he says: “Knowers, when delighted, are afraid more when they are depressed. Very few only stand by the limits of politeness when they get merry.”

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh consequently prefers the state of depression to the state of merriment because he fears the traveler may get out of the command of his time, which is his most needed requirement in the state of merriment. It is not so in the state of depression. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in this connection: “Merriment is the pitfall of man. It calls for their caution and resorting to Allāh...Depression is nearer to safety because it is the slave's place being in the grip of Allāh who is wholly encountering him. How can a slave be merry if such is his place? Merriment is also an exit from the command of time. Depression also befits this world....”

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh compares depression with the dark night and compares merriment with the shining day and shows the traveler that the night of depression may be more beneficial to him than the day of merriment. A traveler does not really know which is more beneficial to him because both are out of his control and are related to Allāh's will and wish. In this, he says to the traveler: “He may benefit you in the night of depression more than in the day of merriment. You do not really know which is more beneficial.”

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh was influenced in his above comparison by his Shaykh Abu-l -Ḥassan ash-Shādhḍhuli, the founder of the Shādhḍhuli school. Ash-Shādhḍhuli preceded him in making this comparison.

Al Rondi in his interpretation of the *Maxims* indicated that Shādhḍhulis, including Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, have completed all talk about depression and merriment unlike other Ṣūfis who only have left to us a few sentences about depression and merriment.

It is natural to find Al Rondi influenced by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh with regard to depression and merriment through his interpretation of the *Maxims*. There is research about Al Rondi (died 1392 AD), by the Spanish orientalist Miguel Asin Palacios in which he refers to the probability that the Christian Ṣūfi San Juan De la Cruz had been influenced in his Ṣūfi doctrine by Al Rondi's doctrine. He states that there is a very strong resemblance with regard to depression and merriment between San Juan de la Cruz and the Shādhḍhulis. He states, after explaining the states of depression and merriment as Shādhḍhulis, including Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, see them, that the state of depression compared to a dark night is strongly similar to the state which San Juan de la Cruz calls “Noche Oscura del Alma” (dark night of the nafs), and considers it the real basis of Ṣūfism. He prefers it to the state of merriment, which is seen by San Juan as also seen by Shādhḍhulis as a kind of the nafs' hidden passions which a Ṣūfi has to conquer more actively than any other passion or pleasure. Palacios is inclined to believe that San Juan de la Cruz had been influenced in his preference of the dark night of depression over merriment by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and Al Rondi, who confirm, as Apalacios says, that Allāh gives his blessing to the nafs in the darkness of depression more than in the shining day of merriment.

Palacios bases his view of the influence of Al Rondi in San Juan de la Cruz on the fact that Al Rondi was born and lived in Spain and was near historically and geographically from the Escuela



Carmelitana, as represented by San Juan de la Cruz. If it is true that San Juan had been influenced by Al Rondi through his interpretation of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's maxims, the views of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh in depression and merriment and other Ṣūfī states must have then been known to Christian mystics of the Middle Ages and had their impact on their mystical doctrines. To go deeper into this point will get us beyond the scope of this work.

#### **4- Annihilation (fana;) and existence (baqa):**

After the states of depression and merriment come two more complete states which are annihilation and existence.

Annihilation, as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh sees it, is an emotional state in which the traveler does not feel or sense any of his external organs, nor what emanates from him, nor what is within himself, but he becomes absent from all these when he is with his Sustainer. If the traveler who is ascertained in the station of annihilation feels that he had completely abandoned himself, that will be a sign of his perfection in his state. Perfection in this respect has to be a complete absence, even from his own annihilation.

Annihilation of annihilation is the objective of annihilation.

Annihilation occurs to the traveler as a result of his continuous thinking of Allāh and concentrating his attention on one special direction for a long time; that can happen in seclusion through dhikr, as mentioned. What Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh states that he who is ascertained in annihilation, will be absent from himself and the outer world, he differs in this connection from Al Suhrawardi, who does not see that absence of feeling is a condition for annihilation. He said in this context: "It is not a necessity for achieving annihilation, that the traveler should be absent of feeling. The absence of feeling may be attained by some people but is no condition in any way for annihilation...."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh indicates that there are three kinds of annihilation, i.e. Allāh annihilates the traveler from his deeds by His deeds, from his attributes by His attributes, and from himself by His Being.

As for annihilating the traveler's deeds by the deeds of Allāh, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says it means that the traveler will be annihilated of his will and self direction. Allāh takes out the slave's will and self direction so the traveler in this case does not see anybody acting except the True.

As for annihilating the traveler from his attributes by the attributes of Allāh, it is for the traveler to witness the attributes of Allāh, so he tries as much as he can to follow and imitate them.

As for annihilating the traveler from himself by Allāh's being, it means that the traveler is made to see the grandeur of Allāh's Being; therefore witnessing the True will occupy his interior and Allāh's Being will cover his own being. Therefore he will not feel or sense himself.

When a traveler is annihilated by his deeds, attributes, and being as mentioned above, he will be existing by Allāh, and hence the state of annihilating will be in fact an introduction to the state of existence. Annihilation will be, as our Ṣhāykh sees: "A corridor for existence through which the traveler can enter." Again, "He that is truthful in his annihilation will be truthful in his existence."

The state of existence, as seen by him, is more perfect than the state of annihilation, because in it, the traveler is not absent from himself or the outer world as in the state of annihilation. In existence, the traveler is aware of himself, of the outer world, and his presence with Allāh in all times and in everything.

As for the difference between the state of annihilation and the state of existence, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says:

“Annihilation provides excuses for them (Ṣūfis), while existence provides them victory,  
 annihilation produces their absence from everything  
 and existence puts them in the presence of Allāh in everything,  
 and so they are not cut off from Him in anything.  
 Annihilation decreases them, and existence creates them....”

He also says about the difference between annihilation and existence: “...he that is annihilated receives from Allāh and he that exists speaks by Allāh. The annihilated's circle of feeling is closed but his sacred presence is opened. He that exists is in the presence of both the circle of his sacredness and feeling. The annihilated is invited to Allāh, but who exists is a caller to Allāh.”

The traveler, as our Shaykh sees, has neither will nor self direction in either his annihilation or his existence, because they are two states which flow on him from Allāh by His sheer will. He says: “...If Allāh wishes, He can get the traveler to stay drowning in the ocean of annihilation. If He wishes, He can deliver him to the beach of existence....”

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh classifies the states in which the traveler (Ṣūfi) is not absent from himself as follows:

##### **5- categories of travelers with regard to states:**

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh indicates in his *Maxims* that people are of three categories with regard to heavenly grants:

- 1) A commoner whose circle of sensuousness has been fortified and whose circle of sacred presence has been diminished, so he sees grants from creations and not from the True. He is an unconscious person. He can be considered an open polytheist because he sees grants coming from people, or that his polytheism is hidden because he resorts to people and to their grants and not to Allāh.
- 2) A traveler on the path to Allāh who is overcome by states of absence, annihilation, intoxication, aggregation, and so he only sees grants from Allāh alone because he is absent from himself and from people so completely in all these states.
- 3) A Ṣūfi who has reached his destination and who is perfected. He has been ascertained by presence after absence, by existence after annihilation, by sobriety after intoxication, by separation after aggregation. He sees grants originally coming from Allāh, but he thanks people for them in pursuit of the rules of Shari'a with respect to gratitude. Listen to our Shaykh saying in this respect: “If the eye of the heart sees that Allāh is unique in granting, Shari'a provides that His creations must be thanked.”

People are of three categories in this connection: one who is unaware, and involved in his unconsciousness. His circle of sensuousness has been strengthened, and his circle of sacredness has diminished so he sees grants coming from creatures and does not see them coming from Allāh. From a “belief” point of view, he is a polytheist.

There is the one who knows and who has been absent from people by beholding the True King. He abandoned means because he saw Who creates man. He is a slave facing Reality, its light shines on him, and is occupied by his travel. He is drowning in light and for him, “others” are diminishing. His intoxication is overcoming his sobriety, his aggregation is overcoming his separation, his annihilation is overcoming his existence, his absence is overcoming his presence.

A more perfected person than this person is a slave who had become drunk, but he becomes more sober, was absented, but he became more present. His aggregation does not veil his separation, his separation does not veil his aggregation. His annihilation does not distract his existence, his existence does not distract his annihilation. “He gives each state its due respect and gives right to whoever has a right on him.”

It is accordingly clear to us, as it is to our Shaykh, how he prefers states in which the traveler is not absent from himself or from people like sobriety, separation, existence and presence. He sees that states of absence, intoxication, annihilation, aggregation, are inferior. This is due, in our view, to the fact that he is an ascertained and deeply rooted Ṣūfī who is guiding others to Allāh. Such a man cannot be affected by states of absence in any way.

## 6- states and dropping self direction:

It has been made clear to us when talking about states that our Shaykh always expresses his view of dropping self direction and will, his faith in fate, and heavenly attention.

He has shown to us that the traveler in his delight, depression, merriment, annihilation, existence, is always without will and without choice, because those states flow over him by the sheer will of Allāh and attention. He also shows to us that a very important prerequisite of annihilation is that the traveler should look for annihilating his deeds by the deeds of Allāh. Allāh takes out his will and choice and so the traveler does not see really any doer except Allāh.

In addition, 'shows to us that the most perfect behavior in states is that the traveler should be without will and without choice to the extent that even if he sees himself ascertained in any state, he does not relate it to his will, or in other words, due to his willing and readiness, otherwise he will pretend something he does not own. That explains why Allāh transmits to him states abruptly so he cannot pretend they are results of his worship and obedience or willful action. In this respect, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in one of his maxims: "Heavenly *waridat* (tidings) are often abrupt so that no slave can pretend them to be results of his preparedness." Heavenly *waridat*, which yield states, are heavenly grants which He bestows on his slaves. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh agrees in this respect with other Ṣūfīs who have states also, that a state is a meaning that descends on the heart without any will, gain or production." States for this reason are "grants" and not earnings in that they come from "the Source of bounty and not my making effort."



## CHAPTER 6: GNOSIS

“Your arrival to Allāh is an arrival to the knowledge of Him. Our Sustainer is too sacred to be connected with anything or that any thing can get connected with Him.”

“He had got you to behold before He asked for your attestation. Organs have confessed His deity, while hearts and secrets have been ascertained with His singularity.”

“Lights may sometimes descend on you to find your hearts full with images of creations, so they return to where they came from. Get your heart empty from creations and knowledge and secrets will fill it.”

“The presence of his creations proves His Names, the presence of His Names proves the existence of His Attributes, and His Attributes prove His Being. It is impossible that any attribute can stand by itself.

He reveals the perfection of His Being to the ‘attracted’, then He gets them to turn to behold His Attributes, then to cling to His Names, then He gets them to return to beholding His creations.

On the contrary is the case of the travelers. The end of the traveler is the beginning of the attracted and the beginning of the traveler is the end of the attracted. They may meet each other on the path; the one while descending and the other while ascending.”

“Knowers by Allāh witness the secrets of ‘malakut’. They have no planning with Allāh as witnessing prevented them from it. How can a slave plan with Allāh, when he is in His presence and witnessing His magnanimity and grandeur?”

- 1- Arrival
- 2- The People of Knowledge and its Nature
- 3- Its Intuitive Being in the Nafs
- 4- Its Two Tools: the Mind and the Heart
- 5- Its Systems: Inference and Beholding
- 6- The Travelers and the Attracted
- 7- Knowledge and Dropping Self Direction

### 1- Arrival:

We have seen in the preceding chapter how a traveler progresses in his stations and states. We had stated that his progress in these stations and states is the fourth and last stage of his nafs-jihad. The end will be the traveler’s arrival to the knowledge of Allāh. This arrival occurs in a state in which the traveler is annihilated from himself and is existing by the knowledge of his Sustainer. Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Illāh shows to us that if annihilation lasts for the traveler, and that is rare, it will remain as a habit and a feature which will ascend with the traveler to the higher sphere. There he will see the pure real existence. The marks of Malakut will be imprinted and the sacredness of ‘lahut’ will be revealed to him. The first thing that he sees of that world is the essence of angels, the spirits of prophets, and walis in beautiful shapes, and through them, knowledge descends on him. All that happens at the beginning. Then, he ascends to degrees which are too superior to be represented in shapes. He is rewarded by Allāh’s authority to him, to deal with everything as he wishes.

Consequently, if a traveler is ascertained in his annihilation by the knowledge of the True, he will be ascertained with true existence.

A traveler who has been ascertained with knowledge is called ‘the reaching’ or ‘*al wasil*’. His arrival to Allāh is an arrival to the knowledge of Allāh. It is not an arrival like that between things or



creations. Allāh is too sacred for that. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says to his mureed: “Your arrival to Allāh is your arrival to the knowledge of Him. Allāh is too sacred to be connected with anything or that anything can be connected with Him.

Our Shaykh therefore entirely alienated Allāh from all human conceiving. When a traveler reaches to the knowledge of Allāh, he would have completed his travel. There would be no additional ascent to target for him because knowledge of Allāh, as Al Rondi says, is the destination of travelers and the end of the road to the marchers.

In the following pages of this chapter, we shall explain our Shaykh’s view about the knowledge of Allāh with regard to its limit, nature, tools, systems, categories, and all that it related with it. We shall also explain our Ṣūfī Shaykh’s doctrine of dropping self direction and will in this field and the results emerging from its application.

## **2- The People of Knowledge and Its Nature:**

Knowledge as defined by Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh is the awareness of something in its being and attributes.

Knowledge of the Creator, as Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says, is the most difficult kind of knowledge because there is nothing that resembles Allāh. Yet Allāh has ordered all His creations to know His Being, Names, and Attributes.

Knowledge of Allāh may be, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, in establishing His existence and excluding Him (in esteem), from what does not befit Him, by describing Him as He is and as He has described Himself. This kind of knowledge is required by everyone and everyone is ordered to attain it. It is called the “general” knowledge.

Knowledge can also be a state that is attained by “taste”. The knower here will be a person whom Allāh has gotten to witness His Being, Attributes, Names, and Deeds. This sort of knowledge is called the “special” knowledge. It is the knowledge of Ṣūfis which is not based on the mind, but on taste. Whether knowledge of Allāh is mental or by taste, its scope is the Heavenly Being with regard to His Attributes, Names, Deeds, and everything else that is related to Him.

As knowledge of Allāh’s Being, Attributes, Names, and Deeds, and of Allāh Who is the Absolute Existence, are far above our world and because our human visualizations, whether material, emotional, or mental, are limited and confused, knowledge of Allāh will therefore be the most difficult kind of knowledge, as our Ṣūfi has said, and that concerning it in reality is beyond human capability.

Knowledge of Allāh, with Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh as with other Ṣūfis with regard to this subject, is most obscure, and it is not easy for those who have not taken the Ṣūfī path to understand any detail of it, because realities that are disclosed to the Ṣūfi in his seclusion are personal realities that are realized to his own conviction and cannot be generalized to others. Ask what a Ṣūfi describes of knowledge, and the reply will often be in a symbolic language which is normally pregnant with obscurity, and it will be difficult for a non-Ṣūfi to share with the Ṣūfi, often to a small degree, in tasting what he expresses of knowledge or in understanding the subjects which are latent in his sayings.

## **3- The Intuitive Presence of Knowledge in The Nafs:**

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says that each creation in the universe knows Allāh because Allāh has instilled a share of that knowledge into it, according to its capacity. In this connection, he says: “...Allāh has ordered all his creations including man, jinn, angels, and shaytan to know His Being, Names, and Attributes. Knowledge is recorded into the animal and the non animal. Each creation realizes the existence of its Creator according to its own capacity. Allāh says: ‘There is nothing that does not utter gratitude to Him.’ He included man, angels, material, plants, air, sand, and water.”

It had been previously ascertained by it in a different world. Ibn Al Farid says in this respect to his mureed:

It is the nafs that has been occupied  
 By its world before it has its human shape.  
 Knowledge had been revealed to it by the Ghaib  
 In a world that guided it to understand strange meanings.  
 All knowledge was imprinted on it previously  
 And was given names by inspiration of the Creator.

Therefore there is knowledge beyond what is known  
 Which is difficult for even the most perfect mureeds to cope with.  
 I took it from my nafs,  
 And my nafs was its source.

#### 4- Tools of Knowledge: The Mind and The Heart:

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, as other Ṣūfis, distinguishes between two tools for knowledge: the mind and the heart.

For him, mind is the talent which deduces knowledge by inference. It is the organ which people know Allāh through mental approaches. As for the heart, it is the talent which gets aware of knowledge by direct feeling (taste). It is not that the price of meat is known as such but it is that inner intelligence which Allāh has instilled in man. It is the organ which is more favored by Ṣūfis to any other organ.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh sees that the heart is positive, not negative. By this he might have meant that the heart is a channel to the certain and assumed knowledge of Allāh, while the mind does not lead to knowledge of Allāh except by negation, and therefore its knowledge does not have the certainty of heart knowledge.

But how can the heart get ascertained with the knowledge of Allāh just by taste (feeling)?

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh replies that whenever the heart proceeds into abstinence of life, leaves its passions, caution, and hope, its singularizations of Allāh becomes perfect. When the heart is filled with the Oneness, as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says, it clings to the Throne and discards completely its human attributes. Its attributes will shine in the higher sphere and its knowledge of the lower sphere will be high and broad. Its insight will be fully widened by the light of the Being name. It will follow Allāh's Attributes and Names and will be obsessed by beholding and will be annihilated even from its own dhikr. About the heart, there is a hadith qudsi (a saying of Allāh on the tongue of the Prophet): "My throne, my chair, and my sky cannot embrace me, but my slave's heart can embrace me."

The meaning of this hadith qudsi is that man's heart, as our Shaykh explains, cannot embrace Allāh in space, imagination, incarnation, feeling, or judgment, but it can embrace it by singularization, belief, knowledge, certainty, love, and devotion by Allāh's grant and selection.

We see together with Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh how Allāh is beyond all that is related to man's mind, and imagination, and visualization. He denies Allāh's incarnation, and denies that Allāh can be bound by space. He shows that knowledge of Allāh in reality is a pure immaterial abstract thing which fills the heart of the traveler when he abstains from the world and conquers all his passions. This certainty

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itself is primarily a result of Allāh's will, grant, and selection, and not of man's will, earning, or choice.

As man's arrival to knowledge will be by purifying the heart, the traveler must turn always to his heart and purify it from its leaning to desires, passions, neglectfulness, etc., so that his heart shines and proceeds on to Allāh and understands the minute secrets of knowledge. Listen to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh urging the traveler to purify his heart to achieve all that:

“How can any heart shine when the images of creations are imprinted on its mirror?  
How can it hope to enter into Allāh's presence when it is washed with its neglectfulness?  
How can it hope to understand minute secrets if it has not yet abandoned its folly?!”

Our Shaykh also shows that, as a condition for knowledge to reach to the heart, the heart must be evacuated from all else. In other words, it should be evacuated from everything except Allāh. In this respect, he says to the traveler: “It is likely that lights sometimes fall on you, but they find your heart full with its images of creations, so they return back to where they came from. Evacuate your heart from the others and He will fill it with knowledge and secrets.”

### **5-The Systems of Knowledge: Influence and Beholding:**

On the basis of distinguishing between the two tools of knowledge, (the mind and the heart), our Shaykh distinguishes between two approaches in this connection; one is concerned with the mind, and that is proving the existence of Allāh through looking into creations and what they have of proofs that indicate the existence of their Creator and His capability. The other is related with the heart, and that is beholding, with which the Ṣūfī feels the heavenly Being in his state of annihilation and absence from the material world.

The mental or rational influence approach is the approach which carries its user to move from one meaning to another, as for example moving from observing the creations of Allāh to the presence of their Creator: Allāh. It is an approach which is used by logicians and philosophers and its deductions are to be trusted.

As for the abstract beholding approach: it does not imply that the mind moves from one meaning to another. It is an approach by which a Ṣūfī feels the Supreme Reality (Allāh), through direct feeling (taste), which has nothing to do with mental deductions. It is also called “Ṣūfī disclosure” (kashf). It is an approach which is only used by Ṣūfis and they prefer it to any other approach for attaining knowledge.

To these two approaches, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in the *Maxims*: “The thinking process is two-fold: thinking of belief and faith and thinking of beholding and witnessing. The first is for mentalists, and the other is for those with insight.”

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh explains that the “inference approach” with which the knower proves that creations prove their Creator, is based on Allāh's saying: “Say, look into what is in the skies and the earth”, and His saying: “Cannot they look at camels, how they were created?” And to Allāh's saying: “In the earth, there are proofs for the assured and also within yourselves. Cannot you see?”

As for the insight approach with which its user reaches to the knowledge of Allāh by direct taste (feeling), which Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh sometimes calls “proving creations by their Creator”, It is based on Allāh's saying: “Is it not enough for your Sustainer that He is beholding everything”, and His saying: “It is enough that Allāh is beholding”, and Allāh's saying: “Is there any doubt in Allāh? The Creator of the skies and the earth.” Although the mental inference approach is credible, yet the knowledge gained does not add to the existence of Allāh because Allāh is always present. When was He absent to look for a proof for proving His presence? How can He be proved by something when its own existence relies on Him?”



Listen to Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh saying in this respect: “There is a great difference between who proves by Him, and who uses things to prove Him. He that proves by Him, has known reality, but who uses things to prove Him, will not reach Him. When has He been absent, as to have to prove His presence? When has He been alienated, as to use creations to get to reach Him?” Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh also says in one of his sweet supplications:

“My Allāh, how can You be proved by something whose very existence relies on You?

Is anything else more visible than you as to reveal You?

When were You absent as to look for a proof to establish Your presence?

When were You alienated as to use creations to get to reach You?”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh becomes astonished when it is said that creations lead to their Creator. Do creations have any real existence in relation to the existence of Allāh as to lead to Him? Or are they more apparent that they can reveal Him?! If creations lead to the knowledge of Allāh by inference, this is only possible because Allāh has authorized them to do it, so they do it by order, not because they in themselves have any power to do it. Consequently, arrival to Allāh can only be attained by a grant from Allāh. “No one reaches Him without Deifying Him.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh considers people who use inference and deduction as commoners in relation to people who behold. He says in this connection: “If you like, you can say that there are two domains: one for proofs and deductions, and the other for beholding and witnessing. The first is for mentalists and the second is for those with insight. For the first, there is the ayah: ‘We shall get them to see our revelations everywhere and within themselves until they believe that He is the True.’ For the second, there is the ayah: ‘Say, Allā h, and leave them in their muddle playing.’”

Mentalists are considered commoners in relation to people with insight because people with insight esteem the True in His prevailing Presence and do not need any proof to prove His Presence. How can He who created proofs be proved? How can He be known by something when He himself got people to know that thing?!”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh calls the mentalists, if they are among Šūfis, the ‘travelers’, and calls Šūfis who rely on the insight approach, the ‘attracted’. We shall see with him the difference between the two:

## 6- The ‘Travelers’ and The ‘Attracted’:

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh classifies Šūfis with regard to the knowledge of Allāh into two groups. The first group is that of the ‘travelers’ who use the creations of Allāh to prove His Names, and His Names to prove His Attributes, and His Attributes to prove His Being. The second group includes the ‘attracted’, to whom Allāh has primarily disclosed the perfection of His Being through direct witnessing. They know Allāh from the beginning, then they turn from knowing the Being to witnessing the Attributes, from witnessing the Attributes to clinging to the Names and then from clinging to the Names to seeing creations.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh calls the travelers’ path, the *path of ascent* and the path of the attracted the *path of descent*. He refers to that in one of his maxims by saying: “He indicated the presence of His Names by the presence of His creations, by presence of His Names, He indicated the certainty of His Attributes, by His Attributes, He indicated His Being, as it is impossible for any attribute to stand by itself. For the attracted, He unveils the perfection of His Being, then He gets them to witness His Attributes, then He gets them to cling to His Names, and then He gets them to witness His creations. As for the travelers, the case is the opposite. The end of the travelers is the beginning of the attracted and the

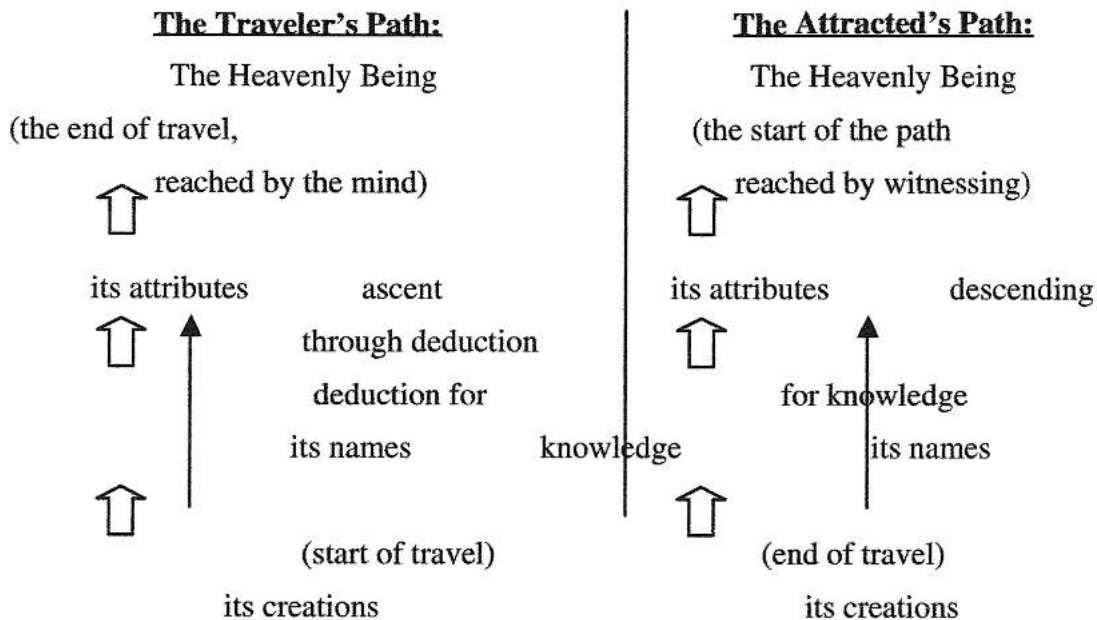
beginning of the travelers is the end of the attracted. They may meet on the path, one in his descent and the other in his ascent.”

It is shown, then, that a traveler depends on mental deductions as he proceeds from proving a case to proving another case until he reaches to the knowledge of Allāh. His mental deduction is an ascending deduction in which he ascends from the contemplation of creations into the knowledge of the creator. His knowledge is a discursive knowledge.

The knowledge of the attracted is a knowledge by taste (feeling), which is attained by a direct intuition. Allāh primarily reveals the perfection of His Being to the attracted, then He gets him to know His names, attributes, and creations. There is here descending deduction from feeling Allāh's Being to proving the creations of Allāh, or what is called the “world of action”.

Witnessing Allāh by the attracted is not a kind of sensible intuition which deals with outer sensible things. It is neither a sort of rational intuition like the realization of relationships between meanings. It is not a sort of a metaphysical intuition which deals with subjects which are out of the reach of senses as is the case with Kant or other modern philosophers. The attracted when witnessing Allāh does not depend on the mind and its tools, but he gets a direct emotional awareness of a special kind which occurs in a state of absence or annihilation. It is not easy to describe it or to subject it to scientific research, because of its subjectivity. The research into the possibility or impossibility of attaining knowledge by this Ṣūfī awareness, about which Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh and other Ṣūfis speak, will be in our view fruitless unless the researcher is himself a Ṣūfī, who has experienced such awareness.

The following is a diagram showing the different paths of the traveler and the attracted as seen by Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh:



**figure (1)**

Because Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh sees knowledge by direct feeling or witnessing as more perfect than knowledge by proofs and mental deductions, and because he considers mentalists or rationalists commoners in relation to people with insight, as we have mentioned earlier, that means he prefers the state of the attracted to the state of the traveler with knowledge of Allāh.

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh's preference of the state of the attracted to the state of the traveler is connected with his basic conception of dropping self direction and the reliance on Allāh's attention. How is it so?

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh indicates that arrival to the knowledge of Allāh is not attained by the traveler's nafs-jihad or his obedience or good deeds because if it were so, that would mean that arrival will be caused by human will while man has no real will in relation to Allāh's Will. Hence arrival to Allāh can only be by Allāh's attention. If arrival to Allāh is by the sheer attention of Allāh, why could not it be possible that there are slaves whom Allāh had primarily chosen for his attention? He got them to know Him directly without getting them to strive or toil into the various states and stations. Allāh is not to be asked *why* He does it so.

By that, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh gives a special place in his Ṣūfī doctrine for Allāh's attention, and believes that the attracted is a person whom Allāh had primarily chosen and got him to know His Being right from the beginning. He had folded the road for him and therefore he missed the hardship and difficulties of the road. Listen to him explaining this to his mureed: "Do not think that the attracted has no path. He has a path that had been for him by Allāh's attention. He passed through it quickly to Allāh. We often hear that the traveler is more perfect than the attracted because the traveler experienced the path and the attracted had not. They say that because they think that the attracted has no path. It is not so. The path has been folded for the attracted. However, he that the path had been folded for, does not miss it. He only misses its hardship and length...."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, and Shādhīdhulis who followed him, esteemed attraction, and their doctrine therefore called for witnessing Allāh right from the first place on the road. In other words, witnessing Allāh in the beginning of the path, and not at its end as other Ṣūfis call for. Shaykh Zarrouq tells us that the degree of attraction as seen by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh and Shādhīdhulis is the degree of the ascertained knower and not the degree of the traveler which Al Ghazali and other Ṣūfis revolve around who look at the knowledge of Allāh as the end of the path, not its beginning. Quite naturally, Shaykh Zarrouq, being a Shādhīdhuli, prefers the first path for the knowledge of Allāh because it coincides with faith, intuition, and sharia's objective in strengthening certainty and piety right from the beginning. In this connection he says: "The variety in a branch is due to the variety of its origin. The origin of Ṣūfism is the station of 'Ihsan (goodness) and it splits into two kinds: to worship Allāh as if you are beholding Him, or because He beholds you. The first is the degree of the knower, the second is the inferior degree. Around the first degree Shādhīdhulis revolve and on the second revolves Al Ghazali. The Shādhīdhulis' degree is founded on the bases which each believer has to possess. Intuition helps to realize it, and shari'a is found in it, because it aims at strengthening certainty and ascertaining piety."

Also, Ibn Ayyad Al Shādhīdhuli says regarding the difference between the Shādhīdhuli theory of knowledge and Al Ghazali's theory of knowledge: "As for the knowledge of states and stations and ethics related to them which is known for Ṣūfis, people within it are grouped into two groups: the group which witnesses the True (Allāh) from their first step in the path, and that is the Shādhīdhuli theory and its followers, and the other is the Ghazali theory, which cares for witnessing the nafs as seen by Allāh and consequently working for uplifting it. Each group loses itself on the prophetic hadith: 'Worship Allāh as if you are seeing Him', and that is for Shādhīdhulis, and the second part of the hadith: 'If you do not witness Him, know that He sees you', and that is for Al Ghazali's group."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's theory of knowledge is quite interesting. On one hand, he does not entirely exclude mental deduction from the Ṣūfī approach, but he considers it as we have seen, a state for the Ṣūfī traveler, yet he thinks it is less perfect than knowledge through insight, with which the attracted is ascertained by his feeling. He therefore does not put down the mind in the way many Ṣūfis do. On the other hand, he considers the attracted's knowledge of Allāh is attained by the sheer attention and will of Allāh, which had decreed that the whole path is to be folded for the attracted from its beginning to the end. This shows that this knowledge occurs at the beginning of the path and not at its end as Al Ghazali and other Ṣūfis believe. In addition, there is another interesting point in Ibn Ata'illah's theory of knowledge and that is his direct application of his idea about dropping self direction and will in this field.



## 7- Knowledge and Dropping Self Direction:

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh states, as we have seen, that knowledge of Allāh had been instilled in the human nafs since the world of atoms, when Allāh said: "Am I not your Sustainer?" He sees it as a sheer outcome of Allāh's attention. He says to his mureed: "Know that the True has always taken good care of you, all your life and He did that too when He brought you to existence... among his good taking care of you, was that He got you to know Him, so you know Him. He revealed himself to you, so you witnessed Him. He got you to speak and inspired you to attest His Deity so you singularized Him...."

This sort of knowledge of Allāh, as seen by Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh, is basically nothing more than a knowledge of dropping self direction with Allāh, because the slave's attestation of Allāh's Deity in the world of atoms means an attestation of dropping planning with Him and dropping partnership with Him in what He alone owns. Dropping planning with Allāh was a bond with Allāh before the existence of the nafs. When the nafs entered into the body and was clothed with it, it started to plan. That means that its knowledge of Allāh was veiled by the thick human veil.

When the Ṣūfī traveler arrives to knowledge, when he witnesses the secrets of the Malakut, and when he faces and finds reality, he will be entirely ascertained with dropping self direction. Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says: "Allāh has agreed with all his slaves in dropping planning with Him by His saying: "...and He got them to attest when He said am I not your Sustainer? They said yes...." Their attestation necessitated a dropping of planning with Him; that was a bind that had occurred before the emergence of the nafs, which is a seat for disturbance and planning with Allāh. Had the slave remained as before, where veils were disclosed and where he was in the presence of Allāh, he would have not planned with Allāh. Yet, when the veil was fallen, disturbance and planning occurred. Due to this, we find that those who know Allāh are witnessing the secrets of the Malakut and that they have no planning with Him."

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh consequently shows to the traveler who wants to be assured with knowledge that it does not befit him to know Allāh and singularize Him in the world of atoms, and then not to know Him here in this material world where he plans with Him and does not resort to Him in his needs or lean on Him. Has Allāh said: "You believers, fulfill your bonds!" What bond is more important than the bond of dropping planning with Allāh, which in itself is a sign of man's slavehood to Allāh and at the same time a proof for certifying Allāh's Deity.

Add to what has preceded, that the essence of knowledge, as seen by Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh, is that the traveler should not see it as related to his will. It is not connected with his deeds of nafs-jihad, whether much or little. Whenever and wherever Allāh wishes to get it to flow on him, it will flow. His striving will not be a cause for its flow, as Allāh's acts are too sacred to be caused by man. Consequently, the mureed should not subside with his deeds of nafs-jihad or become desperate if he finds them so few or on the other hand expects the flow of knowledge because his good deeds are numerous. In this connection, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh advises the mureed by saying:

"If He opens for you a door for knowledge, do not bother if you find that your good deeds were so few. He had not opened it for you except because He wants you to know Him. Do you know that it is He Who gets knowledge to flow on you and that your deeds are presentations from you to Him? How far is the difference between what you present to Him and what He gets to flow on you?"

By all this, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh applies his doctrine of dropping self direction with Allah entirely, showing that it is an intuitive matter with which man had been ascertained in the world of atoms since the time of "Am I not your Sustainer?" On the other hand, he does not relate the occurrence of knowledge to acts of nafs-jihad, much or little, because he believes that man in reality had no will of his own and that the occurrence of knowledge comes by sheer heavenly attention. How many hard working worshipers have not arrived?! How many slaves were chosen by the heavenly attention and the path had been folded for them without experiencing any toil or hardship on the path?!



## CHAPTER 7: WITNESSING THE ONENESS IN EXISTENCE

“Knowers do not see any existence or loss for everything. They only see Allāh and that there is nothing with Him as to need any proof to establish His existence.”

“There are two blisses which are given to everybody and everybody needs them: the bliss of becoming and the bliss of succor.”

“He placed you in the middle world between His kingdom and His Malakut to show you your high place among His creations and that you are a gem which is covered with the shells of His creations.”

“The whole universe is dark. It is lit by the illumination of the True. He that beholds the universe and does not see Him in it, or with it, or before it or after it, will be missing light and the suns of knowledge will be veiled from him by the clouds of creations.”

“Creations are established by Him and are obliterated by the Oneness of His Being.”

“Who beholds creations without beholding the True in them is heedless; he who is of them is a slave that is distracted by the influence of beholding. Who witnesses Allāh in them, is a complete chosen slave.”

### 1- When Does a Şūfi See the Oneness in Existence

### 2- How Were Creations Created

### 3- Degrees of Creations

### 4 - The Relation Between Allāh and Man

### 5- The Relation between Allāh and Creations

### 6- The Oneness

### 7- Categories of Knowers with Regard to Witnessing the Oneness

### 8- Witnessing the Oneness and Dropping Self Direction

### 9- A Discussion of Some Interpretations of Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s Theory About the Oneness & His Interpretation of Existence.

### 1- When Does a Şūfi See the Oneness in Existence:

After a Şūfi is ascertained in the end of the path by the knowledge of Allāh, he proceeds from this knowledge to adopting a doctrine that interprets existence, which is based on a foundation of a Şūfi taste, and not on mental proofs.

This doctrine of interpreting existence which the Şūfi adopts is called by Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh: ‘Witnessing the oneness’. It means that Allāh is the real existence and that all other grades of existence and everything else in the universe except Him, has no real existence. Their existence, which we think real, is in fact imaginary. ‘Witnessing the Oneness’ in existence is achieved by insight and by taste, and it is a necessity for the knowledge of Allāh. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh shows that by saying: “If the Şūfi knows Allāh, Allāh’s existence will be enough for him not to see any other kind of existence, and it will enrich him in a way that he will never consider that he had lost anything. On the other hand, he that loses Allāh will never find anything and he that finds Allāh will never lose anything.

How can one lose anything when he finds Who really reveals it? With knowers, anything except Allāh is neither found nor lost, as there is nothing existing together with Allāh because of His Oneness and there is nothing lost, because only that which exists can be lost. If the veil of illusion is lifted, there will be beholding of the inexistence of creations. When the light of certainty shines, no existence will be seen (“the others”).

Knowers, in their witnessing the Oneness of Allāh in existence, draw their knowledge, as Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh thinks, from the oceans of prophets and Allāh's messengers. He says: "...Knowers by Allāh are witnessing His Oneness and they do not see anything else with Him. If they are so, what do you think of prophets and messengers of Allāh: knowers and mono iests have in fact drawn from their oceans and their lights?"

In order to know Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh's doctrine of witnessing the Oneness, we shall primarily deal in this chapter with Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh's interpretation of existence and his conception of its images, then we shall deal with man's relation with Allāh and show how the knower witnesses the Oneness, then we shall deal with categories of beholders and explain the relation between witnessing the oneness and dropping self direction. We shall end the chapter by a discussion of some misinterpretation of Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh's doctrine about the oneness and interpretation of existence.

## 2- How Creations Were Created:

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says that Allāh had created all creations and those creations are dependent on two blisses from Allāh: creation and succor (supply). The bliss of creation is the act by which Allāh gets a thing to emerge out of its previous nonexistence to its following existence in this world. As for the bliss of support, it is the act that is related with creations after they are created because every created thing needs what would maintain and keep its existence. In other words, it needs what protects it from the following existence. Allāh therefore supports it to maintain its existence. In this respect, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says in his *Maxims*, "There are two blisses which are given to everybody and everybody needs them: the bliss of occurrence and the bliss of getting supported." He also says in explaining that the existence of Allāh is what keeps and maintains the existence of the world: "Allāh has supported all that exists by His grants. Allāh's existence kept the existence of the world by supporting it." He then says to the traveler, showing that his very existence is a sheer grant from Allāh, and maintaining it is by a sheer grant from Allāh to him: "Allāh has first got you to exist and then He got His support to flow over you."

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh thus conceives that all that exists including man is in need, in its very existence and the continuity of it, of Allāh. He (Allāh) alone establishes for them the degree of existence by getting them out of nonexistence and then by His successive support to them. If that had not happened, they would have not existed, and their existence would have not lasted.

What Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh says as an interpretation of existence by occurrence and support is almost identical with what the two French philosophers Decartes and Malbranche said later in what they called *Creation Continuee*.

Decartes finds that God maintains and helps the existence of the world and that the act with which God made the world to exist is the same act with which He maintains its existence. Decartes says: "...It is certain, and that is common among ideologists, that the act with which God maintains the world is the same act with which he has created it." He also believes that God maintains the existence of man; he says: ".... The fact that we are now existing does not necessarily mean that we shall exist the following moment unless there is a cause for that. It is the same cause that got us to exist. It means that we have to maintain our existence although we know so simply that we do not possess within us any power that enables us to remain existing or to maintain our existence in the following moment...."

As Decartes sees that the world needs the continuous acts of God to keep its existence, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh sees also that the world needs after the act of occurrence, to get maintained by an act of support (without any gap between the two acts).

As Decartes sees that man has no power to enable him to stay alive or to maintain his life in the following moment unless there is a cause for that which is God, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh sees also that man depends on Allāh to get him to exist and to maintain his existence for him.

Malbranche has an interpretation of existence similar to that of Decartes and Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh. He says: “If the world is existing, it is only because God is continuously willing to get it to exist. Maintaining the creations (including man) is also made by God as a continuous creation.”

### 3- Grades of Creations:

Creations which Allāh got to be created, though sharing together the two blisses of occurrence and succor, differ in their grades of existence. Allāh had meant that to be in order to get the various aspects of His will and its cast to be known. Listen to Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh saying here: “...Allāh had created all creations and granted them with bliss of occurrence and support. This may explain Allāh’s saying: “My mercy copes with everything.” But when creations shared is bliss of occurrence and support, Allāh wished to distinguish between them to show the vastness of His will and its wide extent. He had endowed some of His creations for example by growth, like plants, animals, man, and so His will was more visibly seen in them than in other creations which are not growing. When those three creations shared each other in growth, He got the animal to share man in living and that living phenomenon was more visible in them than in the plant, which is also living. Then He wanted to single out man and so He gave him the mind, and man was consequently preferred to animal and with the mind, He completed His bliss to man...”

The difference in the grades of creations is, in Ibn Ata’Illah’s view, a proof of the vastness and extent of Allāh’s will and the fact that man’s being is put on the top of creations, is because Allāh granted him with the mind and consequently man became the best of all creations.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh in his preference of man does not only stop at that limit, but man according to His view, is a reservoir for all secrets of the universe, whether high or low and that man combines the two worlds of “mulk” and “Malakut”. Consequently in man, there is a heavenly side and so he really is the gem of the entire existence. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says in the *Maxims* to the traveler: “He placed you in the middle world between His mulk and His Malakut, to get you to know how preferred you are among his creations and that you are a gem which is covered by the shell of all His creations.”

Because man is a reservoir for all secrets of the universe, and at the same time, He combines the two worlds of Mulk and Malakut, the whole universe cannot enclose man except in his bodily reality. As for his spiritual reality, nothing can surround it because it is from Allāh’s command. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says to the traveler: “The universe copes with you as a body, but it cannot enclose your spiritual existence.” In addition to this: “Allāh made the heart of man a place for His knowledge and secrets.” That shows the high degree of man in relation to the degrees of other creations.

To sum up: creations of Allāh differ, in Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh’s view, in their grade of existence and the highest of them is man who had been granted the bliss of mind and had been granted the combination of the two worlds of Mulk and Malakut and also the bliss of his knowledge of Allāh. What comes after man in grade are the animal, plant, and material.

But how does Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh conceive the relation between Allāh, man, and the universe? We shall try to explore that in the following paragraphs by explaining his conception of Allāh’s relation with man and then his conception of Allāh’s relation with the universe:

### 4- Allāh’s Relation with Man:

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh believes that, “Allāh created man to make him the most revealing object of His appearance with regard to His Being and His attributes and to instill into him secrets of knowledge and heavenly lights. Other creations are not so, they have no share of these secrets or lights. Allāh created them with His attributes of power and capability alone. Allāh says: “Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth”. The light of the heavens of spirits with which they witness Him and the light of the nafs’ earth to obey Him and serve Him. He made the hearts of Šūfī knowers a place for revealing His Being and for the appearance of His attributes. He created man specifically to reveal Him because he



is generally revealed in everything. He shows Himself in man by His light and secrets and in man and other things with His power and capability.”

Allāh's appearance in man however does not mean incarnation, combination or mixture in a material sense, it means that Allāh appears alone with His attributes in man taking into consideration His entire difference from man. Consequently, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, out of esteem, excludes Allāh entirely from all human conceptions or visualizations.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in excluding Allāh from incarnation and any other human visualizations: "...It is related after Allāh that He said in a hadith qudsi (heavenly saying): 'My throne, My chair, and My sky cannot contain me, but the heart of My slave does.' The meaning here is that the heart can cope with His singularity, and with faith, knowledge, certainty, love, and devotion being grants and selection by Allāh, but it cannot cope with Him with respect to space, imagination, incarnations, sensing or judgment.”

Man, in Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's view, can possibly exist because he draws his existence from the Absolute Giver of existence: Allāh alone. Alone is the necessary existence. Nothing in the universe can even share with Him this attribute. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh sometimes calls this grade of existence "the potential of need". He says: "...If man beholds Allāh's dominating grip, he will know that his need of Allāh is continuous. This need gives man the grade of slave because he has been created, and everything that is created is in need of a supporter and support to supply him. As Allāh is the ever rich, the slave will need Him always. This need does not abandon man in life or in the hereafter.”

As the reality of man is that he is a creation, so his need of Allāh is an essential need. Man should not be proud of being the highest of creation, as Allāh has endowed him with the mind and knowledge, because this richness is temporary. What is temporary cannot substitute for what is inherent in the being itself. Had man been made rich by his being, he would have been able to drive away everything that contradicts his existence which comes to him by the sheer will and dominance of Allāh. Listen to Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh saying to the traveler: "Your need is inherent in you. Means given to you are reminders to you of what had been forgotten by you of it. Inherent need cannot be obliterated by temporaries.”

If man in reality is a creation, then how can he possibly propagate Deity for himself? His behavior in all cases should be by ascertaining his attributes of slavehood. A slave is a slave and the Sustainer is the Sustainer. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says to the traveler: "Cling to the attributes of His Deity and be ascertained with the attributes of your slavehood.” He also says to him: "He prohibited for you to propagate what is not for the creatures, will He allow you to propagate His attributes while He is the Sustainer of all creations?!" He also says to his mureed, reminding him that his being is really in obligatory need to Allāh: "He had not asked from you anything like being in need of Him. Nothing is more speedy in attaining grants than your obligedness and humility.”

All these maxims aim at sacredly excluding Allāh from man's real partnership with Him in any of His attributes.

If Allāh is sacredly excluded in His Deity and attributes from being like any of His creatures, He is also excluded in His acts from the necessity of having a cause or reason for them from man. Allāh's attention, too, cannot be caused by the slave's obedience or deeds, because Allāh's attention had preceded these deeds and obedience. How can then destiny's deeds be caused by the voluntary will of man? Where was man when Allāh had predestined him by His sheer knowledge which is beyond the scope of times' considerations? Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in this connection to the traveler:

“His attention of you was not due to anything from you.

Where have you been when he bestowed his attention and guidance on you?!

In His destiny there was no devotion in deeds or presence of states.



There was nothing but sheer great endowment and bestowal.”

Allāh’s acts do not even have causes or reasons from Allāh. How can they have causes from man? Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh, in his supplication, says of this meaning: “My Allāh, Your contentment is too sacred to have any cause for it from You. How can it have a cause from me?! You are the Rich by yourself that no benefit can reach You. How can You ever need any benefit from me?!”

Allāh is too sacred for any creature to reach Him in the way beings reach each other. The reach or arrival spoken of by Şūfis is the arrival of knowledge by Allāh, not to combination, not to being incarnated in them, nor in any sort of faulty visualizations.

In this connection, he says to the traveler: “Your arrival to Allāh is an arrival to His knowledge. Allāh is too sacred to get connected with anything or that anything can be connected with Him.”

Exalting Allāh and excluding Him from human visualizations does not stop as such but Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh extends that to his negation of man’s proximity from Allāh as understood between things. The proximity of man from Allāh does not mean anything more than man’s beholding of Allāh’s proximity by taste. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says to his mureed: “You proximity is your beholding of His proximity. Where are you really from His proximity?!”

To sum up all that has preceded, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh conceives of Allāh as existing by the necessity of existence. He caused man to exist and He is too sacred to be visualized, imagined, or conceived in terms of any human consideration such as filling space, incarnation, arrival as understood between things, or proximity in a material sense. In addition, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh protects Allāh’s acts from any thought of being caused by man, and that because he believes that Allāh’s will is absolute and free and to it, everything in the universe submits.

### 5- The Relation Between Allāh and Creations:

Allāh has created creations by His grants of occurrence and supporting supply. But why did Allāh create creations?

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh replies by saying that Allāh has got creations to occur only to get them to be a scope of His relevance in His various attributes. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh considers creations as mirrors that reflect Allāh in such attributes. He says in this connection: “Creations are mirrors of the attributes... creations do not exist to look at them but to see their Creator in them. Allāh’s wish for you is to see them as revealing Allāh and to see them as beings. In this, we composed the lines of poetry:

“Creations have been exposed to you only to see them  
By the eye of who does not see them.  
Light yourself above them in a way that prevents you  
From seeing except only their Creator.”

As Allāh had created all the different creations to reveal His attributes in them and to get man to know Him by such relevance, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh advises the traveler not to see creations in themselves, but to see them as revelations of Allāh in them. He says to the traveler in one of the maxims: “He has permitted you to see what is in the creations but He does not permit you to stop at their being. ‘Say, see what is in the skies.’ By this He opened gates of understanding for you. He did not say, ‘See the skies,’ because this would only get you to behold bodies.”

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh believes that creations of all sorts have no order of real existence. Real existence is only for Allāh, and He has His Oneness in it. Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh compares the existence of creations with the existence of shade. As shade does not exist as a grade of existence, and is not as real as a grade of nonexistence, so creations are neither existing as grades of existence, nor annihilated as grades of nonexistence. Their appearance does obliterate the oneness of Allāh because He is the One in reality

although His shades may be numerous. Creations are not like Him. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says on this point: "The nearest thing to the existence of creations, if you look with the eye of your insight, is the existence of shade. Shade does not exist as a grade of existence and is not annihilated as a grade of nonexistence. If the shade of creations are established, this does obliterate the Oneness of their Creator (Allāh)...."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh shows that the existence of creations is an imaginary existence and that it is nearer to nonexistence than to existence, because what exists by something else is in itself characterized by nonexistence. He says: "...creations have no grade of absolute existence because true existence is for Allāh. He has the Oneness in this existence. Creations only have the existence He alone wishes to establish for them. So you should know that what is in existence does not come from itself, it is nonexistence in its nature...."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh believes that the existence of creations is enclosed in the existence of Allāh because Allāh is attributed by being the 'apparent'. Being apparent means nothing else should be termed as apparent with Him, which means that the evidence is enclosed in His existence. Also being the "hidden" implies that the appearance of anything only emanates from Him because there is no other "interior" with Him. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says here: "He revealed everything because He is the Interior and He enclosed everything because He is the Apparent."

As Allāh is really apparent in all existence, there is no veil whatsoever between Him and the world. Veil is only found in the veiled by their sheer illusions because they have not yet avoided seeing themselves and the "others". Listen to him saying to the traveler: "You are not veiled from Allāh by anything that is with Him. But you are veiled because you imagine the presence of another with Him."

He proves the inexistence of the veil by saying: "The True is not veiled. It is you who is veiled from beholding Him because if He is veiled, there will be something to conceal Him. If he is concealed, it would be existing and dominating Him, while He alone 'is the Dominant over His slaves'."

He also says to the traveler: "...he that beholds the shades of things, they will not hinder him from Allāh as the shades of trees over rivers do not hinder ships from sailing. It is therefore clear to you that the veil is not an existing substance between you and Allāh. If there had been a real veil between you and Him, it must be nearer to you than Him while there is nothing nearer than Allāh. Therefore the reality about veiling is alone imagining its existence...."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh shows his astonishment at creations being causes for veiling Allāh, because Allāh is apparent in the creations themselves by His attributes. He says: "How can the True be veiled by something while He is apparent, existing and present in it?!"

Allāh is apparent in the whole universe and without His appearance in it, it would have never existed. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says here:

"The whole universe is dark, but it is lit by the appearance of the True in it.

He that sees the universe without beholding Allāh in it or with, or before it, or after it, he would be missing lights and suns of knowledge will be covered for him by the clouds of creations."

If Allāh is apparent in the whole universe, what then are the indications of this appearance in Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's view?

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says in one of his maxims showing indications of Allāh's appearance in the universe as such: "How could it be imagined that anything can hide Him, and it is Him who got everything to appear?! How could it be imagined that anything can hide Him. and it is He who is apparent by everything?! How could it be imagined that anything can hide Him. and it is He who is apparent in everything?! How could it be imagined that anything can hide Him and He is the One with whom

there is nothing else?! How could it be imagined that anything can hide Him and without Him nothing could have existed?!”

What is meant by these phrases of Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh? By Allāh getting everything to appear, he means that Allāh got creations to emerge from the darkness of nihility (nonexistence) to the light of existence by His acts of occurrence and support. His being apparent by everything means that the appearance of Allāh is proved by the creations. His being apparent in everything means that it is He Who reveals Himself in everything by His Attributes and Names and not by incarnation. His being apparent to everything means that He is apparent to creations by His Attributes and Names. His being apparent before the occurrence of everything means that He had been existing before time and before anything that existed. His being more apparent than anything means that creations which they had created are not in reality appearing. His being one without anyone else with Him means that Allāh is existing by all considerations of existence. Creations are not like Him, because their existence is absent in relation to the existence of Allāh, Who is the very essence of existence. His being nearer to us than anything else is obvious due to Allāh’s saying: “We have created man and know his suspicions that are within himself. We are nearer to Him than his jugular vein.”

As for the meaning of Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh saying ‘without Him, there would have been no creation for anything’, it is that without existence of Allāh, no existence would have been established for creations. Attracted people have proved the existence of creations by the existence of Allāh.

This is our explanation of the above phrases which indicate the appearance of Allāh. It is to be strictly cautioned to take these phrases by their outer meaning because this may create misunderstanding and will get them out of what he had meant them to be. We shall explain this in another place in this chapter when we deal with some misinterpretations of Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s conception of existence and we shall comment on them to show their incorrectness.

To sum up, Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh sees that Allāh has created creations in the world to make them expressions of His appearance. These creations, irrespective of their grades, have no grace of real existence but the real existence is for Allāh. Creations in relations to Allāh are similar to the presence of the shadow in relation to whom the shadow emanates from. There is no veil whatsoever between Allāh and the universe and that veil itself is something imaginary.

Is it not that what Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh has said about the Oneness of Allāh and that there is nothing with Him, a doctrine of abnegating creations and establishing the Oneness? We shall try now to show his view in this respect in more detail:

## **6- The Oneness:**

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh concludes his conception that creations are not existing in reality by certifying the Oneness with which there is neither plurality or duality.

Allāh, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, is the Absolute Existence that is characterized by real existence; His existence is necessity and that everything else other than Him that exists draws its existence from Him, but in itself it is destroyable and vanishing. For Allāh, there is the perfect existence, its continuity. His presence is everlasting and can never be annihilated.

Allāh is attributed by the Oneness. He cannot be split, or composed or synthesized. He is too sacred to be subjected to temporary changes and in general, He is sacredly secluded from all changes.

Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh also believes that Allāh is the first that ever existed. Nothing was before Him and therefore His Oneness preceded everything. Allāh was and there was nothing with Him. Allāh said about Himself: “I was a hidden treasure. I wished to be known, so I created creations and by Me they know Me.” It is also said: “Allāh was and there was nothing with Him. He is now still what He was.” Time that is implied here, as Al Rondi says, is imaginary and does not really exist. He means that there



is nothing with Allāh because of His Oneness.

As Allāh is attributed by the Oneness, other creations therefore have no existence with Him. Their existence is imaginary in the way Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh has expressed earlier.

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh sums up his doctrine about the Oneness in one of his maxims, which says: "Creations are existing by Him and are annihilated by the Oneness of His Being."

However, what is the way to prove His Oneness?

Using the mind to prove the oneness in the universe is quite possible. Yet our Shaykh does not like this method. He prefers to prove His existence of the oneness in a state of witnessing by taste (feeling). We shall show how this can happen:

### **7- Categories of Knowers With Respect to Beholding the Oneness:**

A Ṣūfī is not ascertained with the witnessing of the Oneness unless his knowledge of Allāh is ascertained. Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh classifies knowers with regards to the witnessing of the oneness into three categories:

There is the knower who reaches the witnessing of the Oneness and the proximity of Allāh by way of insight or the light of the mind. He is a knower that depends on the mind and inferences.

There is a knower who reaches the witnessing of his own nihility in relation to the Oneness of Allāh by the eye of his insight. Although he also depends on the minds and inferences, yet he is more complete than the first.

There is a knower who reaches the witnessing of the Oneness of Allāh in a state of annihilation and absence from himself and the world of creations. He neither sees his existence nor his nihility because witnessing the Oneness overwhelms his heart. He is the Ṣūfī who relies on taste and feeling and not on deductions or proofs and he does not see anything together with Allāh.

About these three categories, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh in one of his maxims says to his mureed: "The way of insight gets you to see His proximity to you. The way of the eye of insight gets you to see your nihility because of His existence. True insight gets you to see His existence, not your existence nor your nihility."

A Ṣūfī who is ascertained with annihilation, and is wrapped in the witnessing of the Oneness of Allāh, never indicates it. How can he indicate when the language itself fails to express his findings? That witnessing is an emotional matter that occupies him entirely and therefore he is not in fact capable of looking for indications. If this is clear, Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh's following statement will be clear. He says: "A knower is not the one who indicates (explains); he will find Allāh nearer to him than any indication. A knower is the one who does not indicate due to his nihility in his existence and because he is being wrapped in his witnessing Him." A Ṣūfī will be ascertained by witnessing the Oneness of Allāh in the universe only when he is in a state of absence from himself. In other words, he is not ascertained by witnessing the Oneness unless he is absent from himself and does not therefore feel his organs, his inner interactions, or the outer world.

Ibn 'Aṭā' Illāh tells us the Ṣūfī's ascertainment of witnessing the Oneness is achieved by dhikr of the name 'Allāh'. It is the name that combines all attributes of deity, the Sustainer's nature who is singular in real existence. He that sticks to dhikr by this name, will "belittle anything else, glorify Allāh's commands, and will behold the fall of creations. He will be overwhelmed by accompaniment, will be resorting to Allāh, will watch his breaths, he will carry on his dhikr by the name outwardly and inwardly until he is filled with infatuation. That means that his secret melts in his existence and the reality of his witnessing. He therefore does not see anything but Allāh and does not feel anything else."



Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh also tells us that dhikr is apt to put the supplicator into a state in which the whole world is aggregated in one entity and he therefore cannot see with the eye of his heart except the only One in the whole existence.

A Şūfi is not ascertained with witnessing the Oneness by a logical deduction or by theoretical research. He is ascertained with it through an epical state of taste which no one else shares with him in it. In this state, he feels that the outer world is not characterized by any real existence due to its vanishing in the existence of Allāh as the light of the candle vanishes in the light of the sun.

By this, Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh confirms that there is only one existence. It is Allāh's existence which is characterized by His Oneness. As Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh's doctrine denies the existence of creations and expresses his belief in various statements, e.g. "the fall of creation", "the obliterations of creations", "the incorrectness of creation", and "the loss of creatures", his doctrine resembles in some respects, the doctrine known in modern philosophy as "Acosmism", in which its defenders advocate that the phenomenal world is but a passing shadow of the reality which is beyond it, and that is God Who is the everlasting reality, characterized by perfect existence.

Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh, however, does not proceed in his abnegation of creations to state that the world of creations is, at the same time, its creator or that it is folded in Him as pantheists say. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh believes that the world of creations is deprived of its existence only in a state of Şūfi annihilation and that a Şūfi should never stand by his annihilation of absence. Perfection would be in that the Şūfi should return to a state of existence in which he sees creations standing by the will of their Creator. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh also does not consider the knower who is ascertained with annihilation in witnessing the Oneness as the most perfect Şūfi. On the contrary, he prefers to him the knower who is ascertained with existence and witnessing the oneness in a state of sobriety.

There is, as Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says, a knower who is absent from seeing creations and does not see anything with the oneness of Allāh and he is, in his view, "spelled by the dominance of witnessing". More perfect than him, is a knower who is ascertained with his existence in the witnessing. He sees creations and witnesses Allāh at the same time. In other words, he sees the Oneness of the True manifested in creations and in his view, he is a "perfect chosen slave".

In fact, Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh and all other Şūfis who express the witnessing of the Oneness, most notable among them Ibn Al Farid, do not give us any proof for witnessing the Oneness, except what they call the beholding taste which to them is superior to the mind and its deductions. They are ascertained with that taste in a state of annihilation. Consequently, their interpretation of existence is not strictly a sort of metaphysical theory. Such theories interpret existence on a mental basis and with logical analysis. From this angle alone, we should consider the Şūfi doctrine as Şūfis do not trust the mind and its deductions, not the sense and their systems, but they believe in the heart and what is exposed to it by taste (inner feeling).

### **8- Witnessing the Oneness and Dropping Self Direction:**

The most important qualification for he who witnesses the Oneness of Allāh, in Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh's view, is that he should be dropping will and self direction.

As the beholder of the Oneness of Allāh is ascertained with knowledge, and the knower by Allāh is dropping self direction entirely, therefore the beholder of the Oneness of Allāh is also dropping his self direction and will; otherwise he would not be a knower.

That is one side of the subject, and the other is that the knower who has arrived and who witnesses the Oneness of Allāh does not see his deeds as related to his own will because he does not in fact see anything due to his witnessing of the Oneness. Ibn ʿAṭāʾIllāh says in this connection: "He (Allāh) cut off those who are proceeding to Him and those who have arrived from seeing their deeds or noticing their states. As for those who are proceeding, it is because they are not yet fully ascertained with the

Truth with Allāh. As for those who have arrived, it is because HE has drawn them out from seeing them by getting them to behold Him.”

Add to the above that the knower, who is witnessing the Oneness of Allāh in creations, has been ascertained by his facing and his feeling. His cover has been lifted, so what he sees is a successor of his preceding beholding in the world of atoms, since “Am I not your Lord?” For this reason, knowers by Allāh, who are beholding the secrets of His Mulk and Malakut, have no planning with Allāh, as “facing” prevents them from it, and it splits any will from planning. How can a slave plan with Allāh, when he is in His presence and beholding the glory of His greatness?” “If the slave remains as such (as witnessing the Oneness of Allāh in the world of atoms), which implies the opening of covers and remaining in the presence, he cannot plan with Allāh...”

When those who witness the Oneness of Allāh are ascertained by the attention of Allāh and His choice, they would be for Allāh alone, and not for anybody else. Hence, they would have no wish other than the wish of Allāh. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says here: “Those who were proceeding to Him have been guided by the light of their approach. Those who have arrived have the lights of “facing”. The first are directed to the light and the second, lights are directed to them because they are for Allāh and nobody else.” “Say Allāh and keep them playing in their muddle.”

In conclusion, the witnessing of the Oneness in existence is a witnessing of the greatness of Allāh, and even if we don't single Him out in the real existence, then there can be no self planning among those who witness Him and completely submerge themselves with Him.

#### **9- Discussion of Some of the Misinterpretations of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's view on the Oneness and His Interpretation of Existence:**

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh had summed up his doctrine of the Oneness in existence as we have seen by saying that creations are existing by His existence and are obliterated by the Oneness of His Being. His interpreters have explained the word Oneness in various ways:

1) Ibn Abbad Al Rondi interprets the oneness as viewed by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh by his saying: “The Oneness can not be ascertained unless there is not anything that is stronger or more perfect than it. A sign of its existence is the obliteration and discarding of creations, because if they exist, there would be no Oneness, but there would be plurality and duality.”

The Oneness (singularity), as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh described, abnegates plurality and duality and being ascertained with it instigates the obliteration and discarding of creations in relation to the existence of Allāh, who is characterized by His singularity. Such an interpretation coincides with what Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh had meant by abnegating creations and establishing the existence of the only real One, which is the existence of Allāh, both by taste and witnessing.

2) The interpretation of Al Rondi was adopted by another interpreter who followed him, Ibn Ajiba Al Hassani.

3) There is, however, another interpreter of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's doctrine who interpreted it as Pantheism. He interpreted the term Oneness, as viewed by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, by the same meaning in common with Ibn Arabi's school. That interpreter is Shaykh Abdullah Al Sharqawi.

Shaykh Al Sharqawi says re an interpretation of the Oneness as seen by Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh: “...the Oneness according to the knowers is the Pure Being, i.e. the non-apparent in creations, so creations then will have their existence by the appearance of Allāh in them. They therefore say (symbolically): “Oneness is a sea without waves and singularity is a sea with waves.” Allāh to them is like the sea, creations are like waves which are moved by the sea. So they are not the sea, but nothing other than it. That is the tawhid of knowers. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh has described that in his book *Maxims*.” Shaykh Al Sharqawi then comments by saying: “Many have written about Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's view about the Oneness of existence, which leaves nothing more to be added.”

It is shown by that, Shaykh Al Sharqawi considers Ibn Ata'illah's doctrine as a doctrine of Pantheism and he explains the Oneness as understood by Ibn Arabi and his school.

Ibn Arabi distinguishes between what is called Allāh's oneness or in other words, the Oneness of the singular on one side, and the Oneness of numerousness on the other side. His interpretation of the existence views creations as their own creator. Does Ibn Ata'illah's statement really mean that?

The answer is no. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh does not mean by the Oneness, the Pure Being which is not apparent in creations, as Shaykh Al Sharqawi means. With Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh, it means the attribute of Allāh's Being which is not shared by anything created. The Oneness is Allāh's attribute, which is the absolute existence, and which is the real existence: the necessary existence from which any creation draws its existence by its two fold bliss of occurrence and supplying support. What is other than Allāh of creations, is not Allāh's being, but is a "possibility" that draws its existence from something outside it. From this point, it is in fact nihility in itself. Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh says: "Creations do not have any absolute existence, because real and true existence is for Allāh and He has the Oneness in it. Creations have the existence Allāh has established for them. Now then, that what draws its existence from something other than it, is in fact nihility in itself."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh therefore distinguishes between two kinds of existence: an absolute and necessary existence on one side, and a limited and possible existence on the other side.

In order to confirm this theory, we quote here a statement from Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's book, *The Abstract Intention (Al Qusd Al Mujarrad)*, in which he distinguishes between the existence of Allāh and the existence which is possible. "The difference between the Absolute existence and the limited existence is that limited existence is not free from temporary characteristics, like movement, silence, life, death, space, boundary, aggregation, separation, change, and adversity. What is not free from change and is itself changeable and produced. What is created must have a creator (which is Allāh), Who is not like them or similar to them because if He is like them or similar to them, He would be affected by what affects them, and will be subjected to change and will Himself need a creator. The absolute Oneness (Allāh) is out of the scope of temporary and negative changes, and is characterized by eternal, everlasting, and real attributes. If it is possible that he can be annihilated, he would not be the eternal creator. Allāh is attributed by perfection, grandeur, sacredness, and bounty, which all befit Him alone. He is the One that cannot be split, composed, combined, or synthesized. He is the eternally ancient, a One for whose existence there is no end, the absolutely Rich, who does not need or depend on anything else, therefore He is not in need of anybody because of His Being, Perfection, Attributes, and Deeds... He is singular in the Oneness."

It is evident then, that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh never believed or thought of Pantheism. He does not see that the existing reality is one is its essence or that creations are the creator Himself, but he confirms that Allāh is inestimably different from all creations, and that creations are only possible and can be annihilated. They are therefore a nihility in relation to the existence of Allāh, Who is the True Existence.

Add to the above that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh believes that creations have existed by an act of occurrence and he therefore believes in "the creation out of nihility" (creation ex nihility). Ibn Arabi's theory in the Oneness of existence does not admit the idea of "creation of nihility". Ibn Arabi interprets the existence of creations by what is called heavenly flow, which is eternal (was and will still be) and by the appearance of the Real, every moment in unlimited numbers of shapes. This theory is similar to the "theory of heavenly flow" in which the Egyptian Ṣūfī poet, Omar Ibn Al Farid, believes. He says that the Heavenly Being had supplied the different creations by its supply, in which the Being was enumerated and varied after it was One and Absolute and that is due to the readiness of the Heavenly Being to emanate multiplicity from itself.

What also abnegates that Ibn Ata'illah's theory was a theory of Pantheism is Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's saying of the "possible" vis a vis the "necessary". Ibn Arabi's theory in the Oneness of existence does not admit



the possible, which means the changeable and produced creation which in itself is nihility and which is in need for its existence for Allāh Who is the “necessary” in spite of what Ibn Arabi called (the possible creations), as in his view, these possible creations are also necessary because they are created by the power which is really existing, and which philosophers call the “existence by the other”, by which they mean that its existence is necessary by something other than it. Ibn Arabi believes in two grades of existence being the “necessary” and the “impossible”.

Ibn Arabi seems therefore coinciding with the theory because if we consider creations as “possible”, that means that they have occurred in time and that it is not its founder that would be opposed to his theory in which he says that existence is one in reality and enumerated by imagination. Ibn Arabi says: “The secret which is beyond this subject, is that the “possible” are in their state of nihility and there is no existence except the existence of Allāh in the shape of these “possible” (creations) in themselves and entities....”

What is evident from all that had been said, it that Ibn Ata'illah's theory about the Oneness is absolutely different from Pantheism as understood by Ibn Arabi or the other philosophers who advocate Pantheism, and so Shaykh Al Sharqawi has to understand. Shaykh Al Sharqawi was not correct in his interpretation of the term Oneness as understood by Ibn 'Ata'illāh and making its meaning identical with its meaning as viewed by Ibn Arabi's school.

Had Shaykh Al Sharqawi misinterpreted Ibn Ata'illah's theory about the Oneness as being a theory of pantheism, there is another researcher, namely the late Dr. Zaki Mubarak, who has also misinterpreted Ibn Ata'illah's theory as being a theory of incarnation. We shall deal now with what he had said in this connection and we show its share of correctness or incorrectness:

4) Dr. Zaki Mubarak says: “Ibn 'Atā'illāh has said words which are mixed with the theory of incarnation, and which allege the being of Allāh in everything and mean that there is no drop, no plant, no breeze which is not a part of the heavenly Being. This is taken from Ibn 'Atā'illāh's saying: ‘Worshippers and abstainers get themselves alienated from everything due to their absence from Allāh's Being in everything. Had they seen Him in everything, they would have never been alienated from anything.’ Also Ibn Ata'illah's saying: ‘He knew that you cannot endure being away from Him, so He showed you what had emanated from Him.’ This second statement is obvious in his saying of incarnation because it shows clearly that the world is the emanating part of Allāh, and that the believer has to see Allāh in everything that exists.”

What Dr. Zaki Mubarak says is entirely far from being correct, because he had been beguiled in explaining the above two maxims of Ibn 'Atā'illāh due to the fact that he only understood the outer meaning of their words. Witnessing Allāh in everything in the first maxim does not mean according to Ibn 'Atā'illāh's theory that Allāh had been incarnated in creation, or that He had been incarnated in man on the way Al-Hallaj talked about the instillation of Deity in humanity. Ibn 'Atā'illāh rejects entirely incarnation in all its shapes and most certainly incarnation had never crossed his mind when he wrote his maxims and injected his Ṣūfī tastes in them. Considerations of time and space mentioned by Ibn 'Atā'illāh in his maxims or other statements, must never be taken by their outer linguistic meaning. Al Rondi, in his interpretation of the *Maxims*, had stated that caution, because time and space are human visualizations, and Allāh is entirely beyond them. The meaning of that maxim, as we see it, is that worshippers and abstainers are in a state of alienation from all creations because they only see Allāh. This state, which they experience, is however less perfect than the state of the Ṣūfī who is ascertained by the state of separation, who had first dropped seeing creations in themselves and then he got ascertained by witnessing Allāh appearing by His attributes in them, and not being incarnated in them.

Secondly, creations are a field for expressing Allāh's capabilities, perfections, and bounty, and consequently witnessing Allāh in creations means seeing Him manifesting in them His various



attributes, not being incarnated in them.

Also, what Dr. Zaki Mubarak says about Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s saying “He knew that you could not endure being away from Him, so He showed you what had emanated from Him”, means clearly a saying of incarnation because it reveals that the world is emanating part of Him”, is incorrect due to the following two reasons:

1) If we admit that Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh views the world as the emanating part of Allāh, that would not even mean incarnation as the word incarnation means, because incarnation means either a flowing instillation which is “a combination of two things in a way that when you mention one of them, you mean the other at the same time as the flow of the rose water in the rose. That thing which “flows in” is called instilled. The thing that has been flowed by, is called the place for instillation. Instillation can also be by nearness, which means that “one of the two bodies is a partner of the other as the instillation of water in a cup.” The saying that the world is the part that emanates from Allāh means that Allāh had been instilled in the world, which makes the reference to Allāh meaning the reliance to the world. Yet, the world as an emanating part of Allāh, does not mean in any way that Allāh is instilled in the world as water is instilled in the cup. It means something different from what Dr. Zaki Mubarak had understood. It is that Allāh cannot be split.

2) The second reason results from the first reason. It is unbelievable that Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh, who adopts a doctrine in the Oneness of Allāh in which he states that Allāh is the absolute existence which is characterized by real and necessary existence, and that He “cannot be split, composed, or combined”, and who estimably sees Allāh beyond all human visualizations, can contradict himself as to state in one of his maxims that the world is Allāh’s part.

The result which Dr. Zaki Mubarak wanted to extract from Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s maxims is contradictory to rationality and can be refuted by a proof deducted from the meaning of the Oneness.

What is meant by the Oneness is that Allāh is a singular reality that is beyond composition because every composed thing needs each part of its composition and simultaneously each part of it is different from it. Consequently, each thing that is composed needs another. Each thing that needs another is “possible” and consequently, each thing that is composed is “possible”. Allāh, Who is the Creator of all creations, would then be “possible” and that is impossible.

When the Oneness is established, incarnation is obliterated, because Allāh should not be confined in a space; what is confined in space, its left will be different from its right, and everything that is so will be divisible and the One cannot be confined in space and because He is not spaced in, He will never be in anything that is spaced or cornered, and should never be instilled in anything because if it is instilled, it can never be One. He cannot also be a place in which anything can be instilled because He will not then be One.

Consequently, the maxim in which Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh says to the traveler: “He knew you could not endure being away from Him, so He showed you what had emanated from Him”, can never mean incarnation or that the world is Allāh’s part that had emanated from Him, as Dr. Zaki Mubarak has said.

What then is the real meaning?

The meaning of the maxim is related to Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s doctrine of knowledge as we have explained earlier. His saying to his mureed that Allāh had known that you could not endure being away from Him, “...so HE showed you what had emanated from Him”, means that man, due to his previous witnessing of Allāh’s Oneness and his knowledge of it since the world of atoms, cannot endure absence from Allāh. Somehow he always remembers his previous beholding and knowledge. Because Allāh knows this about man, He created the world and revealed Himself in it in all His different attributes and perfection in order that man sees Allāh as apparent in His creations. The emanation of the world, in Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh’s view, cannot mean that the world is Allāh’s part, but means that the

world is revealed by His relevance to it. Emanation, then, means relevance or appearance. That the world is revealed by the relevance of Allāh, means the world is revealed by the two fold act of occurrence and supporting supply. Consequently, it becomes a "possible" existence and is different in its existence from the nature of the Creator's existence.

How can it then be said that the world is Allāh's part, or that the "possible: is a part of the "necessary" or "imperative"?

To sum up, Dr. Zaki Mubarak was not correct in his understanding of the gist of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's two maxims, which he quoted to prove that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh had been spreading news of incarnation because he interpreted them both by the outer meaning of the words and not by the provisions of Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's doctrine in the Oneness and the interpretation of existence.

Now that we have shown that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's doctrine is entirely alienated from pantheism and incarnation, what could it be then?

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's doctrine is a doctrine in witnessing the Oneness in creations only in a Ṣūfī state when the Ṣūfī gets absent from himself and from creations and when he cannot see anything except Allāh in the existence. Yet, that Ṣūfī should not carry on in his abstention of creations so as to state that they are completely annihilated or that creations are enclosed in the existence of Allāh, meaning that speaking of creations will be exactly speaking of Allāh. The Ṣūfī is returned from his annihilating of himself and the world to a state of existence. In other words, he returns from the state of communion to the state of separation where he sees creations standing by their Creator and at the same time not obliterating His Oneness.

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh's interpretation of existence, as such, is a matter which has been admitted by the fiercest enemy of Ṣūfism, i.e. Ibn Taymiyya. In one of his messages, Ibn Taymiyya confirms, as Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh confirms, two kinds of existence which are different from each other. One of them is created and produces and consequently the Creator is different from the created. Ibn Taymiyya also confirms that the obliteration of creations is impossible. He claims those Ṣūfis who are absented from seeing creations and also those Ṣūfis who do not see themselves, think that what one has not seen is a nihility in itself and he may therefore fall into speaking of incarnation or instillation. He says: "...this state happens to many travelers. Of whom one may be absent from seeing himself and other creations and who calls this state annihilation. It is a state of absence from seeing creations, and not that creations in themselves were annihilated... from this angle, a group of them fell into incarnation and instillation. One of them may repeat the name of Allāh, until his heart is overwhelmed by the Name. He gets obsessed by it and consequently nothing remains of him to see except Allāh. He would then imagine that creations have been annihilated, his nafs has also been annihilated and may then go to the extent to which he imagines that he is himself Allāh and that creations are Allāh."

Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh most probably wanted to show his theory as being in between the witnessing the Oneness and admitting the duality by saying: "The useful knowledge is the knowledge of Allāh. Yet who carries on in witnessing the Oneness and is not confined to the considerations of shari'a (Islamic jurisdiction) would be thrown into the sea of atheism. The truth is that one should be ascertained with the reality (of the Oneness) and should be at the same time confined by the limits of shari'a. The ascertained Ṣūfī should not fly away with reality, yet he should not stand by the exterior shari'a, but should be in between the two."

In fact, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh in his expression of witnessing the Oneness is completely well balanced. I have never seen a Ṣūfī statement of his which could be considered as an aberration, of which we find so many examples with Ṣūfis like Al Bustami, Al Hallaj, Ibn Arabi, Afif-Addin Al Tilmissani, and others. That is due to the fact that Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh is influenced by the Shādhḍhuli school, headed by Abū-l-Ḥassan aṣh-Shādhḍhuli, who used to prefer separation to communion and used to advise his mureeds on equilibrium and balance when expressing realities of the Oneness, in the way Ibn

‘Aṭā’Illāh himself relates in his book *Lata’if Al Minan*, saying:

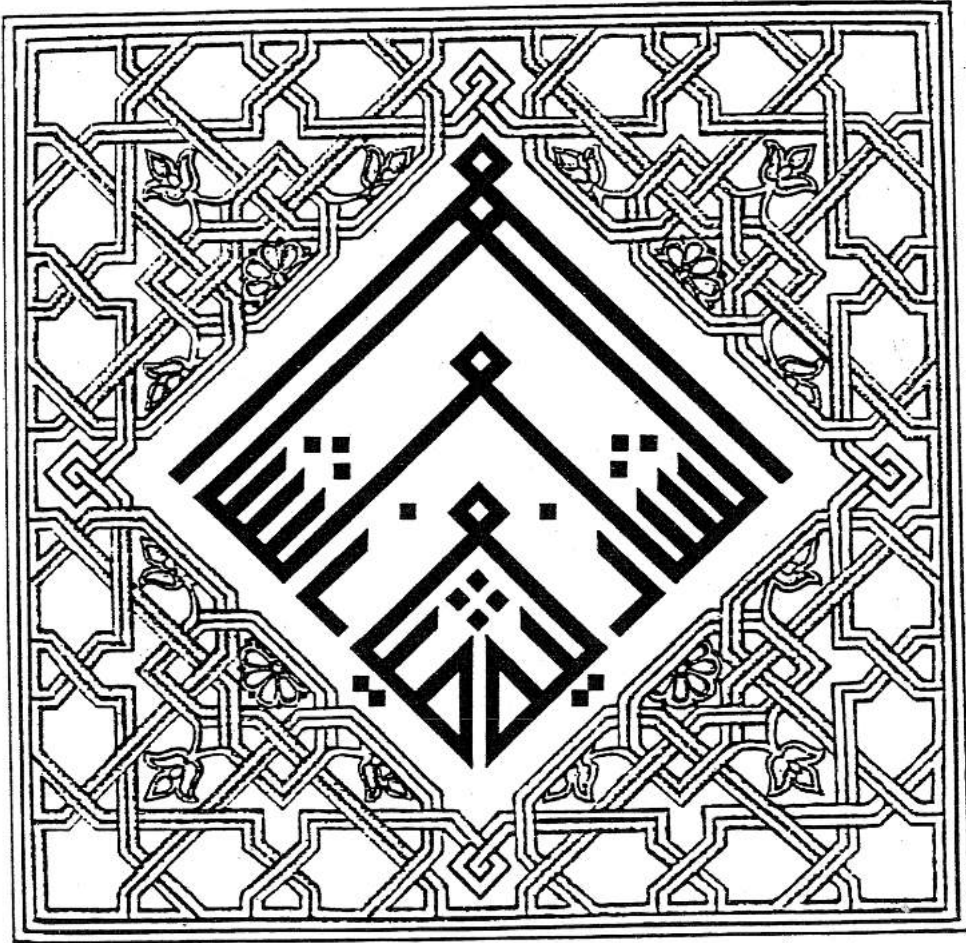
‘Shaykh Abū-l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhīdī said: “I had a friend who frequently asked me about the Oneness. I said to him:

If you want the unquestionable truth,  
that should be by having separation of your tongue  
and communion seen in your interior.”

That is in addition to the fact that Ibn ‘Aṭā’Illāh was a guiding Shaykh to the ethics of the path and such a one must be an ascertained Ṣūfī who is free from aberrations.



المَدْرَسَةُ الشَّادْهُولِيَّةُ



The School of the Shādhūliyyah

الجزء الثاني  
أُصُولُ الشَّادْهُولِيَّةِ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ترجمة: الفقيران إلى الله: المعداوى الزير و عبد الله نور الدين دوركى

المدرسة الشاذلية  
al-Madrasatu-sh-Shādhḍhuliyyah



الجزء الثانى  
أصول الشاذلية

إنتج و تعليق: عبد الله نور الدين دوركى

المدرسة الشاذلية لطائفة النور والهدى

The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah  
for  
Tranquillity of Being and Illumination of Hearts

الطبعة الثانى

٢٠١٢ © ١٤٣٢

رقم الايداع ١٩٩٢/٤٣٥١ : رقم الدولى ١-٢-٥٠٥٦٧٠٥-٩٨٢٦٧٠٥-٩٧٨٠٠  
الخطوط بقلم الفنان كامل إبراهيم مدير مدرسة الخط بالإسكندرية

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِحْتَرَسْ يَا مُرِيدُ وَ يَا طَالِبُ

إذا عارض كشفك الكتاب و السنة فتمسك بالكتاب و السنة  
و دع الكشف و قل لنفسك:  
إن الله تعالى قد ضمن العصمة في الكتاب و السنة،  
و لم يضمنها لى فى جانب الكشف و لا الإلهام، و لا المشاهدة،  
مع أنهم أجمعوا على أنه لا ينبغي العمل بالكشف، و لا الإلهام،  
و لا المشاهدة إلا بعد عرضه على الكتاب و السنة «

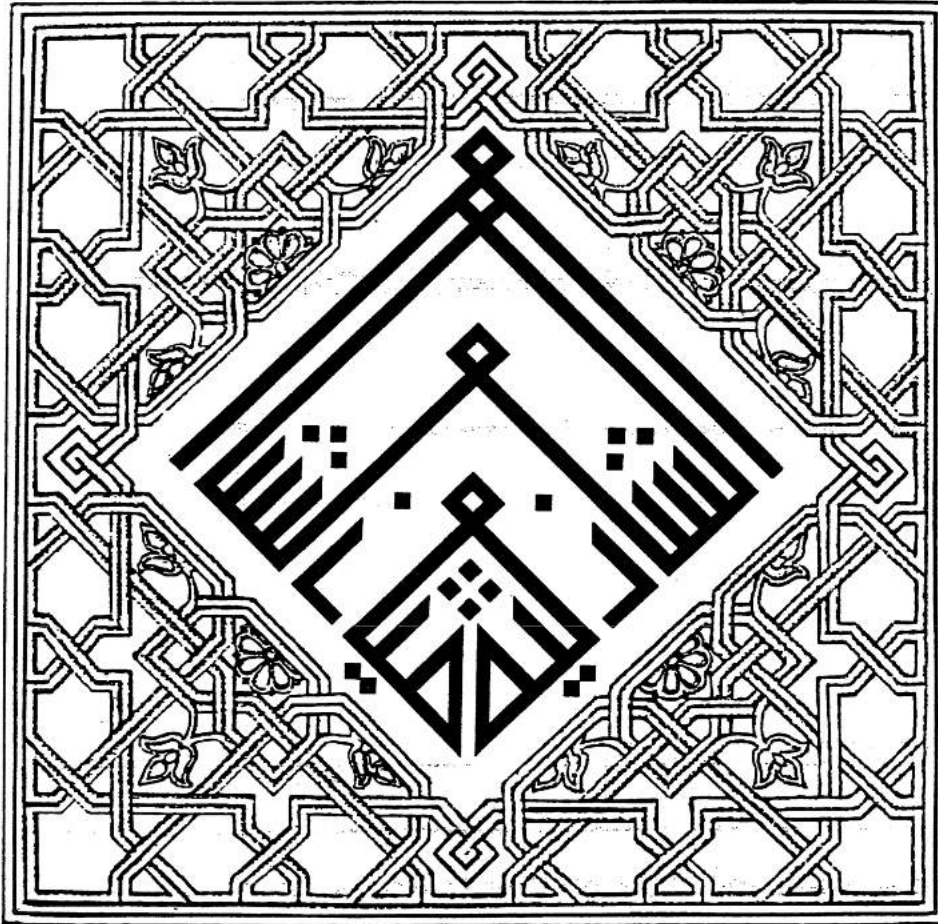
العارف بالله القطب الشيخ على أبى الحسن الشاذلى

« أيها المرید: إذا أردت السلوك إلى الله  
فاعلم أنه لابد أولاً من التخلي عن نفسك  
و أول خطوة لهذا السلوك هو الإسلام  
الذى هو عبارة عن الشريعة التى من عند الله  
و بدون هذه الخطوة الأولى « الشريعة »  
لا يمكن الوصول أو السلوك إلى الله تعالى «

الشيخ نور الدين الغريب



# اذْكَارُ وَادْعِيَّةٌ



للعارف بالله القطب الشيخ على أبي الحسن الشاذلي  
« قدس الله سره »

## Remembrances & Supplications

{ the texts as they appear on pages 166 through 173 of the First Arabic Edition }

{ the conclusion of Chapter Eight of the first English translation }

by

The Knower by Allāh, The Pivot, Shāykh ‘Alī Abū-l Ḥasan aṣḥ-Shādhḍhulī  
{ May Allāh sanctify his Secret }





*Raising the flag at Humaythira*

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

ʿAʿŪDhU BI-LLĀHI MINA-Sh-ShAYṬĀNI-R-RAJĪM

I take refuge with Allāh from the accursed shayṭān

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

AL-ḤAMDU-LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

*Praise to Allāh, Sustaining Lord of the Worlds*

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

AR-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*The Mercy Full, The Bestower of Mercy*

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

MĀLIKI YŌWMI-D-DĪN

*Master of the Day of Requital*

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

ʾIYYĀKA NAʿBUDU WA ʾIYYĀKA NASTAʿĪN

*To You our worship — and to You our petitions*

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

ḌIHDINĀ-Ṣ-ṢIRĀṬA-L-MUSTAQĪM

*Guide us on the Straight Path.*

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

ṢIRĀṬA-L-LADhĪNA ḌANʿAMTA ʿALAYHIM  
GhĀYRI-L-MAGhḌŪBI ʿALAYHIM WA LĀ-Ḍ-ḌĀĀLLĪN

*The Path of those upon whom You have bestowed blessings  
not that of those upon whom is Your Wrath or who are astray.*  
{1:1-7}

أَمِينَ

ĀĀĀMMĪN

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

ALLĀHU LĀĀ ʿILĀHA ILLĀ HUW • AL-ḤAYYU-L-QAYYŪM

*Allāh! — no deity except Him • The Ever Living, The Eternally Present.*

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

LĀ TAʿKhUDhUHU SINATUṢW-WA LĀ NŌWM

*He is taken neither by slumber nor sleep.*

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

LAHŪ MĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA MĀ FĪ-L-ARD

*To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.*

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

MAN DhĀ-L-LADhĪ YASHFA'U 'INDAHŪŪ 'ILLĀ BPIDhNIH

*Who is there to intercede with Him save by His permission?*

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ

YA'LAMU MĀ BAYNA 'AYDĪHIM WA MĀ KhALFAHUM

*He knows what is betwixt their hands and behind their backs,*

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

WA LĀ YUHĪTŪNA BI-ShAY'IM-MIN 'ILMIHĪ 'ILLĀ BIMĀ ShĀĀ'

*and they encompass no thing from His Knowledge except that He wills .*

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

WASI'A KURSIYYUHU-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-'ARD

*His Foundation is wider than the heavens and the earth.*

وَلَا يَؤُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا

WA LĀ YA'ŪDUHU HIFDhUHUMĀ

*And He is not tired by their preservation.*

وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

WA HUWA-L-'ALIYYU-L-'ADhĪM

*And He is The All High, The Sublime.*



ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ

ḤĀMANA-R-RASŪLU BIMĀĀ ḤUNZILA ḤILAYHI MIR-R-RABBIHI WA-L-MUḤMINŪN

*The Messenger believes in that which was sent down upon him from his Lord, and the believers;*

كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ مَلَائِكَتِهِ وَ كُتُبِهِ وَ رُسُلِهِ

KULLUN ḤĀMANA BI-LLĀHI WA MALĀĀḤIKATIHĪ WA KUTUBIHĪ WA RUSULIH

*they each believe in Allāh, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers,*

لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ

LĀ NUFARRIQU BAYNA ḤAḤADIM-MIR-RUSULIH

— we make no discrimination between any one of His Messengers —

وَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَ أَطَعْنَا

WA QĀLŪ SAMIḤNĀ WA ḤAṬAḤNĀ

*and they say, "We hear and we obey.*

غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَ إِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

GhUFRĀNAKA RABBANĀ WA ḤILAYKA-L-MAṢĪR

*{We beseech} Your Forgiveness, Oh Lord, and to You is the homecoming."*

{2:285}

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

LĀ YUKALLIFU-LLĀHU NAFSAN ḤILLĀ WUSḤAHĀ

*Allāh burdens no soul except to its capacity.*

لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَ عَلَيْهَا مَا أَكْتَسَبَتْ

LAHĀ MĀ KASABATWA ʿALAYHĀ MĀ-K-TASABAT

*to it — what it earned — and upon it — what it deserved.*

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا

RABBANĀ LĀ TUʾĀKHIDHĪNĀ ʾIN-N-NASĪNĀ ʾŌW ʾAKHṬAʾNĀ

*Our Lord, do not censure us in our omissions or our commissions of error.*

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِمْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا

RABBANĀ WA LĀ TAḤMIL ʿALAYNĀ ʾIṢRAN  
KAMĀ ḤAMALTAHU ʿALĀ-L-LADHĪNA MIN QABĀLINĀ

*Our Lord, do not lay a load on us like the load you laid on those who came before us.*

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ

RABBANĀ WA LĀ TUḤAMMILNĀ MĀ LĀ ṬĀQATA LANĀ BIH

*Our Lord, do not lay a load on us that we are not capable of bearing,*

وَ آَعْفُ عَنَّا وَ آَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَ آَرْحَمْنَا

WA-ʿFU ʿANNĀ WA-GH-FIR LANĀ WA-R-ḤAMNĀ

*and pardon us and forgive us and have mercy on us.*

أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

ʾANTA MŌWLĀNĀ FA-N-ṢURNĀ ʿALA-L-QŌWMI-L-KĀFIRĪN

*You are our Protector! Aid us against the disbelievers.*

اَلَمْ . اَللّٰهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ اَلْحَيُّ اَلْقَيُّوْمُ

ALIF LĀĀĀM MĪĪM • ALLĀHU LĀĀ ḌILĀHA ḌILLĀ HUW • AL-ḤAYYU-L-QAYYŪWM

*Alif Lāāām Mīūm • Allāh: no deity other than He • The Ever Living, The Eternal.*

نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ اَلْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ  
وَ اَنْزَلَ اَلتَّوْرَةَ وَ اَلْاِنْجِيلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ  
وَ اَنْزَلَ اَلْفُرْقَانَ

NAZZALA ʿALAYKA-L-KITĀBA BIL-ḤAQQI MUṢADDIQAL-L-LIMĀ BAYNA YADAYHI  
WA ḌANZALA-T-TŌWRĀTA WA-L-ḌINJĪLA MIN QABLU HUDAL-L-LIN-NĀSI-  
WA ḌANZALA-L-FURQĀN

*He sent down upon you The Book with The Truth that confirms that which preceded it  
and He sent down the Torah and the Gospels among earlier Guidance to the people  
and He sent down the Means of Discernment <sup>1</sup>*

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ

ḌINNA-L-LADhĪNA KAFARŪ BPAYĀTI-LLĀHI LAHUM ʿADhĀBUN ShĀDĪDā

*As for those who cover up the Signs of Allāh, for them there is intense torment,*

وَ اَللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ ذُوْ اَنْتِقَامٍ

WA-LLĀHU ʿAZĪZUN DhŪ-N-TIQĀM

*and Allāh {is} supremely powerful, the embodiment of vengeance.*

اِنَّ اَللّٰهَ لَا يَخْفٰى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَ لَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ

ḌINNA-LLĀHA LĀ YAKhFĀ ALAYHI ShĀYUN FĪ-L-ḌARDI WA LĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀĀḌ

*Allāh! Truly no thing is concealed from Him in the earth or in the heavens.*

{3:1-5}

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

HUWA-L-LADhĪ YUṢAW-WIRUKUM FĪ-L-ʾARḤĀMI KAYFA YASHĀʾ

*He it is Who forms you in the wombs as He wills.*

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

LĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLĀ HUW • AL-ʿAZĪZU-L-ḤAKĪM

*No deity except He, The All-Powerful, The Wise.*

{3:6}

قُلْ اَللّٰهُمَّ مَلِكَ الْمُلْكِ

تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ

QULLI-L-LĀHUMMA MĀLIKA-L-MULKI-

TUṬĪ-L-MULKA MAN TASHĀʾU WA TANZIʿU-L-MULKA MIMMAN TASHĀʾ

*Say: Oh Allāh, Possessor of Supreme Sovereignty,  
You give the Authority to whom You wish and You seize the Dominion from whom You will*

وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ

WA TUʿIZZU MAN TASHĀʾU WA TUDhILLU MAN TASHĀʾ

*You exalt whom You will and You abase whom You will*

بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ

BI-YADIKĀ-L-KhAYR

*In Your Hand is the good*

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA ʿALĀ KULLI ShĀYʾIN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things.*

{3:26}



تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَ تُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ

TŪLIJU-L-LAYLA FĪ-N-NAHĀRI WA TŪLIJU-N-NAHĀRA FĪ-L-LAYL

*You cause the night to penetrate the day and the day to penetrate the night.*

وَ تُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَ تُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ

WA TUKhRIJU-L-HAYYA MINA-L-MAYYĪTI

WA TUKhRIJU-L-MAYYĪTA MINA-L-HAYY

*You bring forth the living from the dead and You bring forth the dead from the living,*

وَ تَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

WA TARZUQU MAN TASHĀĀU BI-GhAYRI ḤISĀBā

*and You provide to whom You will without reckoning.*

{3:27}

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَسْأَلُكَ صُحْبَةَ الْخَوْفِ

ALLĀHUMMA ḌINNĪ ḌAS'ALUKA ṢUḤBATA-L-KhŌWF

*Oh Allāh, I ask you for the companionship of fear,*

وَ غَلَبَةِ الشَّوْقِ وَ ثَبَاتِ الْعِلْمِ وَ دَوَامَ الذِّكْرِ

WA GhĀLABATA-Sh-ShŌWQI WA ThĀBĀTA-L-'ILMI WA DAWĀMA-Dh-DhIKR

*and victory over desire and permanent knowledge and perpetual remembrance*

وَ نَسْأَلُكَ سِرَّ الْأَسْرَارِ الْمَانِعِ مِنَ الْإِصْرَارِ

WA NAS'ALUKA SIRRA-L-ḌASRĀRI-L-MĀNĪ'I MINA-L-'IṢRĀR

*and we beseech You the secret of secrets that enables us to resist premeditated willfulness*

حَتَّى لَا يَكُونَ لَنَا مَعَ الذَّنْبِ أَوْ الْعَيْبِ قَرَارٌ

HATTA LĀ YAKŪNA LANĀ MA‘A-Dĥ-DĥANBI ‘ŌW-L-‘AYBI QARĀR

in order that it not be for us {a cause for} guilt or constant shame.

وَاجْتَبَيْنَا وَآهَدْنَا إِلَى الْعَمَلِ بِهِذِهِ الْكَلِمَاتِ الَّتِي بَسَطْتَهَا لَنَا

WA-Jĥ-TABINĀ WA-H-DINĀ ‘ILA-L-‘AMALI BI-HADĥIHI-L-KALIMĀTI-L  
-LATĪ BASAṬTAHĀ LANĀ

Grant to us and guide us to action by those words which, for our sake, You radiated forth

عَلَى لِسَانِ رَسُولِكَ

‘ALA LISĀNI RASŪLIK

from the tongue of Your Messenger  
{blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him}

وَآبَتَلَيْتَ بِهِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلَكَ فَأَتَمَّمَهُنَّ

WA-Bĥ-TALAYTA BI-HINNA ‘IBĥRĀHĪMA KĥALĪLA KA FA‘ATAMMAHUNN

By them You tested Your friend ‘Ibĥrāhīm and he fulfilled them.  
{peace be upon him}

قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا

QĀLA ‘INNĪ JĥILUKA LI-N-NĀSI ‘IMĀMĀ

He said: Behold, I shall make you a leader for the people.

قَالَ وَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي

QĀLA WA MIN DĥURRIYYATĪ

Said he: And of my seed?

قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

QĀLA LĀ YANĀLU ʿAHDĪ-Ḍḥ-ḌḥĀLIMĪN

*He said: My Covenant does not include the oppressors.*  
{2:124}

فَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

FAʿAJĀʿALNĀ MINA-L-MUḤSINĪN

So make us to be from the exemplars.

مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ آدَمَ وَنُوحٍ

MIN ḌḥURRIYYATIHI WA MIN ḌḥURRIYYATI ĀĀDAMA WA NŪḤ

From his seed and from the seed of Ādam and Nūh  
{peace be upon them}

وَاسْلُكْ بِنَا سَبِيلَ أُمَّةِ الْمُتَّقِينَ

WA-S-LUK BINĀ SABĪLA ḌAḌIMMATA-L-MUTTAQĪN

that we may follow in the way of those who fulfill the Covenant.

وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

WA-LLĀHU BAṢĪRUM-BI-L-ʿIBĀD

*and Allāh sees the worshippers.*  
{3:15}

رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ظُلْمًا كَثِيرًا وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

RABBI ḌINNI ḌḥALAMTU NAFSĪ ḌḥALMAN KATHĪRĀN

WA LĀ YAGḥFIRU-Ḍḥ-ḌḥUNŪBA ḌILLA ḌANTA

Oh my Lord, truly I have oppressed my self grievously  
and there is no One to forgive my mistakes other than You.

فَاغْفِرْ لِي وَارْحَمْنِي وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ

FA-GĤFIRLĠ WA-R-HAMNĠ WA TUB ʿALAY

Forgive me and have Mercy on me and grant me Repentance.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

LĀ ILĀHA ʾILLĀ ʾANTA SUBĤĀNAKA ʾINNĠ KUNTU MINA-ḌĤ-ḌĤĀLIMĠN

*There is no deity but You — Praise be to You — I am from the benighted oppressors.*

{21:87}

The Shaykh said,

“This act of asking forgiveness has a great value and a bounteous light.  
Apply it and you will see wonders.

After this I say,

يَا اللَّهُ، يَا عَلَى يَا عَظِيمُ، يَا حَلِيمُ يَا عَلِيمُ، يَا سَمِيعُ يَا بَصِيرُ،  
يَا مُرِيدُ يَا قَدِيرُ، يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّومُ، يَا رَحْمَنُ يَا رَحِيمُ،

YĀ ALLĀH • YĀ ʿALĠYU YĀ ʿADĤĠM • YĀ ḤĀLĠMU YĀ ʿALĠM • YĀ SAMĠʿU YĀ BAṢĠR •  
YĀ MURĠDU YĀ QADĠR • YĀ HAYYU YĀ QAYYŪM • YĀ RAĤMĀNU YĀ RAĤĠM •

Oh Allāh • Oh Most High, Oh Exalted • Oh Gentle, Oh Knower • Oh Hearer, Oh Seer  
Oh Willer, Oh Decreeer • Oh Ever Living, Oh Self Subsisting • Oh Merciful, Oh Compassionate

يَا مَنْ هُوَ هُوَ يَا هُوَ  
يَا أَوَّلُ يَا آخِرُ يَا ظَاهِرُ يَا بَاطِنُ

YĀ MAN HUWA HUWA YĀ HUW  
YĀ ʾAWWAL YĀ ʾĀKĤIR YĀ ḌĤĀHIR YĀ BĀṬIN

Oh You who are the He of Him, Oh He.  
Oh First, Oh Last, Oh Outer, Oh Inner.

تَبَرَّكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَلِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

TABĀRAKA-S-MU RABBIKA ḌĤĠ-L-JALĀLI WA-L-ʾIKRĀM

*Blessed be the Name of your Lord — Possessor of Majesty and Honour.*

{55:78}



اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّنِيْ بِاَسْمِكَ الْعَظِيْمِ

ALLĀHUMMA ṢILNĪ BI-S-MIKA-L-ḥADḥĪM

Oh Allāh, connect me to Your Supreme Name

اَلَّذِيْ لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَهُ شَيْءٌ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

ALLADḥĪ LĀ YADURRU MAḥAHU ShĀYIN FĪ-L-ḌARDI WA LĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀḌ

by which nothing is harmed in the earth or in the sky

وَهَبْ لِي مِنْهُ سِرًّا لَا تَضُرُّ مَعَهُ الذُّنُوبُ شَيْئًا

وَأَجْعَلْ لِي مِنْهُ وَجْهًا تُقْضَى بِهِ الْحَوَائِجُ

مِنْ الْقَلْبِ وَالْعَقْلِ وَالرُّوحِ وَالسِّرِّ وَالنَّفْسِ وَالْبَدَنِ

WA HABĀ LĪ MINHU SIRRAL-LA TADURRU MAḥAHU-Dḥ-DḥUNŪBU ShĀYĀ  
WA-JĀḥ-AL LĪ MINHU WAJĀHĀN TUQĀḌĀ BIHI-L-ḤAWĀḐIJU-  
MINA-L-QALBI WA-L-ḥAQĀLIWA-R-RŪḥI WA-S-SIRRI WA-N-NAFSI WA-L-BADAN

And grant me from It<sup>2</sup> secrets which nullify the harm of any sinful thing,--  
and make me from It a Presence in which are settled the pressing needs  
of the heart and of the intellect and of the spirit and of the secret and of the self and of the body.

وَجْهًا تَدْفَعُ بِهِ الْحَوَائِجُ مِنْ الْقَلْبِ وَالْعَقْلِ وَالنَّفْسِ وَالْبَدَنِ

WA WAJĀHĀN TADĀFAḥU BIHI-L-ḤAWĀḐIJU-MINA-L-  
-QALBI WA-L-ḥAQĀLIWA-N-NAFSI WA-L-BADAN

and a Presence  
which staves off the pressing needs of the heart and the intellect and the self and the body

وَأَدْرِجْ اَسْمَائِيْ تَحْتَ اَسْمَائِكَ

WA-DĀ-RIJĀ ḐASMĀḐĪ TAHTA ḐASMĀḐIK

Enter my names beneath Your Names and my attributes beneath Your Attributes

<sup>2</sup> The Supreme Name

وَ أَفْعَالِي تَحْتَ أَفْعَالِكَ

WA ʾAFĀLI TAḤTA ʾAFʿĀLIK

and my actions beneath Your Actions

دَرَجَ السَّلَامَةِ وَ إِسْقَاطَ الْمَلَامَةِ وَ تَنْزُلَ الْكَرَامَةِ وَ طُهُورَ الْأَمَانَةِ

DARJA-S-SALĀMATI WA ʾISQĀṬA-L-MALĀMAH  
WA TANNUZULA-L-KARĀMATI WA ṬḥUHŪRA-L-ʾAMĀNAH

An entry of safety and cessation of blame  
and the descent of spiritual wonders and the manifestatations of pure trust.

وَ كُنْ لِي فِيْمَا أَتَّبَلَيْتُ بِهِ أئِمَّةَ الْهُدَى مِنْ كَلِمَاتِكَ

WA KUN LĪ FĪMĀ-BĀ-TULĪTU BIHI ʾAʾIMATA-L-HUDĀ MIN KALIMĀTIK

and Be for me in trials and tribulations as You were for the leaders of guidance from Your Words

وَ آغْنِنِي حَتَّى يُغْنِيَ بِي،  
وَ أَحْيِنِي حَتَّى تُحْيِيَ بِي مَا شِئْتَ وَ مَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ

WA-GḥNINĪ ḤATTA YUGḥNI BĪ  
WA ʾAḥYINĪ ḤATTA YUḤTĪ BĪ MĀ ShĪTA WA MAN ShĪTA MIN ʾIBĀDAIK

Enrich me until I enrich by that  
and give me life that I may give life to whomever and whichever from amongst Your worshippers.

وَ اجْعَلْنِي خَزَانَةَ الْأَرْبَعِينَ وَ مِنْ خَالِصَةِ الْمُتَّقِينَ

WA-JāʿALNĪ KhĀZĀNATA-L-ʾARBAʿĪN WA MIN KhĀLIṢATI-L-MUTTAQĪN

And make me to be from the Treasury of the Forty<sup>3</sup> and from the Pure God Fearing Ones.

<sup>3</sup> The Forty refers to the forty substitutes {*al-ʾabdāl*} for the prophets of Bani ʾIsraʾīl who exist among the followers and their followers until the end of time, and the forty righteous ones {*aṣ-ṣiddiqīn*} living in Shām responsible for the descent of 'rain' upon the earth

وَ أَغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدَكَ الظَّالِمُونَ

WA-Gḥ-FIR LĪ FAḤINNAHU LĀ YANĀLU ḤAHDAKA-Ḍḥ-ḌḥĀLIMUN

And forgive me, for Your Covenant is not bestowed upon the oppressors.

طَسَ . حَمَ . عَسَقَ

· · TĀW SĪIN · ḤĀ MĪIM · ḤAYĪIN SĪIN QĀĀĀF

{ Hold ĀĀĀ and Ī for six counts. Hold Ā for two counts. }

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ

MARAJA-L-BAḤRĀYNI YĀLTAQIYĀNI BĀYNAHUMĀ BARZAKḥUN LĀ YĀBĀGḥĪYĀN

He let forth the two seas that come together, between them is a barrier they do not pass.

{55:19-20}

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

AL-ḤAMDU-LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-ḤĀLAMĪN

Praise to Allāh, Sustaining Lord of the Worlds.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, the Bestower of Mercy.

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ . اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

QUL HUWA-LLĀHU ḤAḤADĀ • ALLĀHU-Ṣ-ṢAMADĀ

Say He, Allāh, is One. Allāh, The Everlasting Self-Subsisting.

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ . وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ .

LAM YALIDĀ WA LAM YULADĀ WA LAM YAKUL-LAHŪ KUFUWAN ḤAḤADĀ

Neither begetting nor begotten and no one is equal to Him.. -

{112:1-4}

و من دعائه  
from his supplications

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْأَلُكَ بِجَاهِ مُحَمَّدٍ الْمُصْطَفٰى وَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ الَّذِى وَفٰى

ALLĀHUMMA ʾINNĪ ʾASʾALUKA BI-JĀHI MUḤAMMADIL-L-MUṢṬAFĀ  
WA ʾIBĀARĀHĪMA-L-LADhĪ WAFFĀ

Oh Allāh I ask You by the grace of Muḥammad the Chosen  
and ʾIbārāhīm who fulfilled his promise;  
{peace and blessings of Allāh be upon them both}

وَ بِحُرْمَةِ كُلِّ رَسُوْلٍ وَ نَبِىٍّ

WA ʾBI-ḤURMATI KULLI RASŪLIŅ WA NABBIY

and by the Sanctity of every Messenger and Prophet;  
{peace and blessings of Allāh be upon them all}

وَ صَدِيْقٍ وَ وَلِىٍّ وَ شَهِيدٍ وَ صٰلِحٍ وَ تَقِىٍّ

WA ṢIDDIQIŅ WA WALIYYIŅ WA ShĀHĪDIŅ WA ṢĀLIḤIŅ WA TAQIYY

and Truth-full one and Close Friend and Martyr and Whole one and God-conscious Fearer;  
{may Allāh be pleased with them all}

وَ بِحُرْمَةِ عَظِيْمِ الْأَسْمَاءِ

WA BI-ḤURMATI ʿADhĪMI-L-ʾASMĀʾ

and by the Sanctity of the Greatest Name;

وَ بِالْأَسْمَاءِ كُلِّهَا

اَسْأَلُكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْ تَمْحَقَ هَذَا الْخَلْقَ مِنْ قُلُوْبِنَا

WA BI-L-ʾASMĀʾI KULIHĀ

ASʾALUKA ALLĀHUMMA ʾAN TAMḤAQHA HADhĀ-L-KhĀLQA MIN QULŪBINĀʾ

and by the all the Names.  
We ask You, oh Allāh, to banish this creation from our hearts.



وَأَنْ تَجْعَلَهُمْ فِي أَسْرَارِنَا كَالْهَنَّا فِي الْهَوَاءِ

WA ḌAN TAJġĀLAHUM FĪ ḌASRĀRINĀ KĀLHANĀ FĪ-L-HAWĀ

and make it to be in our Secret Internal Selfs as mere motes in the air.

وَأَسْأَلُكَ بِنَا سَبِيلَ أَنْبِيَائِكَ وَأَصْفِيَائِكَ وَأَتْقِيَائِكَ

WA ḌASḌALUKA BINĀ SABĪLA ḌAMBIĀḌIKA WA ḌAṢḌFĪYĀḌIK WA ḌATQIYĀḌIKA

And we implore You that we might tread the road of Your Prophets and Chosen Ones  
{Peace be upon them all}

فِي السِّرِّ وَالْعَلَانِيَةِ

FĪ-S-SIRRI WA-L-ḌALĀNIYAT

in secret and in the open.

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA ḌALĀ KULLI ShĀYIN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things*  
{3:26}

وَمِنْ ذِكْرِهِ وَدَعَائِهِ

from his remembrance & supplication

يَا أَلَلَّهُ يَا نُورُ يَا حَقُّ يَا مُبِينُ

YĀ ALLĀHU YĀ NŪRU YĀ HAQQU YĀ MUBĪN

Oh Allāh, Oh Light, Oh Truth, Oh Clarity.

إِفْتَحْ قَلْبِي بِنُورِكَ وَعَلِّمْنِي مِنْ عِلْمِكَ

ḌIFTAḌ QALBĪ BI-NŪRIKA WA ḌALLIMĪ MIN ḌILMIK

Open my heart with Your Light and teach me from Your Knowledge.

وَ أَحْفَظْنِي بِحِفْظِكَ وَ أَسْمِعْنِي مِنْكَ

WA-H-FADḥNĪ BI-HIFḍHIKA WA'ASMIN'NI MINK

Protect me with Your Protection and cause me to hear from You

وَ فَهِّمْنِي عَنْكَ وَ بَصِّرْنِي بِكَ

WA FAHHIMĪ 'ANKA WA BASSIRNĪ MINK

and make me to understand about You and my vision to be from You.

وَ سَبِّ لِي سَبَبًا مِنْ فَضْلِكَ

WA SABBIB LĪ SABABĀM-MIN FADLIK

Cause there to be for me subsistence from Your Graciousness.

تَغْنِنِي بِهِ مِنَ الْفَقْرِ وَ تُعِزِّنِي بِهِ مِنَ الْاَذَلِّ

TAGḥNINĪ BIHI MINA-L-FAQRI WA TU'IZZUNĪ BIHI MINA-Dḥ-DḥIL

That I might be enriched by it from poverty and be honoured by it from abasement

وَ تُصْلِحْ لِي بِهِ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةَ

WA TUSLIḤ LĪ BIHI-D-DUNYĀ WA-L-ĀĀKHĪRAH

{By this grant} cause my life in this world and the last to be whole and sound,

وَ تُوَصِّلْنِي بِهِ إِلَى النَّظَرِ إِلَى وَجْهِكَ فِي جَنَّةِ الْفِرْدَوْسِ

WA TUWAṢILNĪ BIHI 'ILĀ-N-NADḥARI 'ILĀ WAJĥHIKA FĪ JANNATI-L-FIRDŌWS

a cause whereby I might behold Your Presence in the Garden of Paradise.

إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA ʿALĀ KULLI SHĀYʾIN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things.*

{3:26}

يَا نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَ نِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

YĀ NIʿMA-L-MŌWLĀ WA NIʿAMA-N-NAṢĪR

*Oh Perfect Treasurer , Oh Perfect Support.*

و من دعائه

from his supplications

وَفَقَّنَا ٱللَّهَ وَ إِيَّاكُمْ لِمَا يُحِبُّهُ وَ يَرْضَاهُ  
وَ خَارَ لَنَا وَ إِيَّاكُمْ وَ فِيمَا قَدَّرَهُ وَ قَضَاهُ  
وَ جَعَلَنَا وَ إِيَّاكُمْ مِنَ ٱلْفَائِزِينَ يَوْمَ لِقَآهُ

WA FAQANĀ-LLĀHU WA ʾIYĀKUM LIMĀ YUḤIBBUHU WA YARḌĀH  
WA KHĀRA LANĀ WA ʾIYĀKUM WA QĪMĀ QADDARAHU WA QAḌĀH  
WA JAʿALANĀ WA ʾIYĀKUM MINA-L-FĀʾIZĪN YŌWMA LI-QĀH

May Allāh grant us success and you in what He loves and is pleasing to Him  
and what He chose and destined for us and for you  
and make us and you to be triumphant on the day we meet Him.

ٱللَّهُمَّ تَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ وَ ٱلْحَقَّنَا بِمُحَمَّدٍ وَ حِزْبِهِ  
عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضَا مِنكَ وَ مِنْهُمْ مَعَ ٱلسَّلَامَةِ  
مِنَ ٱلْحَيَاءِ ۚ ٱلْخَجَلِ وَ ٱلذُّلِّ بِمَا سَلَفَ مِنَّا مِنْ أَعْمَالِ ٱلْمُخْلِطِينَ

ALLĀHUMMA TAWAFANĀ MUSLIMĪN  
WA-L-HIQĀNĀ BI-MUḤAMMADIN WA HIZBIHI  
ʿALĀ-R-RIDĀ MINKA WA MINHUM MAʿA-S-SALĀMAH MINA-L-HAYĀʾI-L-KHĀJALI  
WA-DH-DHULLI BIMĀ SALĀFA MINNĀ MIN ʾAʿMĀLI-L-MUKHLIṬĪN

Oh Allāh make us to die as Muslims  
and connect us to Muḥammad and his band with contentment from You and from them  
with safety from abashment and shame and abasement rising from our past wrong actions

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْفِرْناَ فِى جَهْلِنَا وَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا بِغَفْلَتِنَا عَنْكَ  
وَ لَا بِسُوءِ اَدْبِنَا مَعَكَ وَ مَعَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ الْكَرَامِ الْكَاتِبِيْنَ

ALLĀHUMMA-Gĥ-FIRNĀ FI JAHLINĀ WA LĀ TU'ĀKHĪDHNĀ BI-GĥAFLATINĀ 'ANK  
WA LĀ BI-SŪ'I'ADABINĀ MA'AKA WA MĀ'A-L-MALĀĀ'IKATI-L-KARĀMI-L-KĀTIBĪN

Oh Allāh forgive us our ignorance and do not censure us for our heedlessness of You  
and wickedness of our manners with You and with Your noble recording angels.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَ غَفْلَتَنَا جَهْلَنَا بِنِعْمِكَ

ALLĀHUMMA-Gĥ-FIR LANĀ DhUNŪBANĀ WA GĥAFLATANĀ JĀHLĀNA BI-NA'IMIK

Oh Allāh forgive us our faults and our ignorant heedlessness of Your Grace

وَ اَغْفِرْ لَنَا قِلَّةَ حَيٰٓءِنَا مِنْكَ وَ اَقْبِلْ عَلَيْنَا بِوَجْهِكَ

WA-Gĥ-FIR LANĀ QILLATA ḤAYĀ'INA MINKA WA-QĀ-BIL 'ALAYNĀ BI-WAJĤHIK

and forgive us our loathsome abasement and turn Your Face to us

وَ لَا تَفْتِنَّا بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ

WA LĀ TAFTINNĀ BI-ShĀY'IN MIN KhĀLQIK

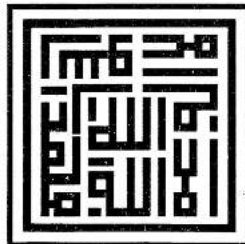
and do not seduce us by any thing from Your Creation

اِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

INNAKA 'ALĀ KULLI ShĀY'IN QADĪR

Truly You have power over all things

{3:26}





اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْفِرْ لَنَا مَا عَلِمَهُ الْبَشَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ  
وَاَغْفِرْ لَنَا مَا عَلِمْتَهُ وَكَتَبَتْهُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ  
وَاَغْفِرْ لَنَا مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْ اَنْفُسِنَا وَ لَمْ يَعْلَمْهُ اَحَدٌ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ  
وَاَغْفِرْ لَنَا مَا اَسْتَاثَرْتَ بِهِ عَنَّا فِي جَمِيعِ اَحْكَامِكَ  
وَتَفَضَّلْ عَلَيْنَا بِالْغَنَى عَنْ جَمِيعِ خَلْقِكَ  
وَبَرِّفِ الْحِجَابَ فَيَمَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ

ALLĀHUMMA-Gh-FIR LANĀ MĀ ʿALIMAHU-L-BASHĀRU MIN KhALQIK  
WA-Gh-FIR LANĀ MĀ ʿALIMATHU WA KATABATHU-L-MALĀʾĪKATUK  
WA-Gh-FIR LANĀ MĀ ʿALIMNĀ MIN ḌANFUSINĀ  
WA LAM YAʿLAMHU ḌAḤADUN MIN KhALQIK  
WA-Gh-FIR LANĀ MĀ-S-TAṬḤARTĀ BIHI ʿANNĀ FĪ JAMĪʿI ḌAḤKĀMIK  
WA TAFADIL ʿALAYNĀ BI-L-GhINĪ ʿAN JAMĪʿI KhALQIK  
WA BARFĪ-L-HIJĀBA FĪMA BAYNANĀ WA BAYNAK

Oh Allāh, forgive us from what the people know about us,  
and forgive us what You Know and what Your Angels have recorded,  
and forgive us what we know of our own selves and what not one from Your Creatures knows  
of us.

And forgive us from that which You have kept to Your Self and from all Your Judgments,  
and be generous to us so that we are not needful from any of Your Creatures,  
and lift the veils between us and You.

اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

INNAKA ʿALĀ KULLI ShĀYIN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things*  
{3:26}



اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْفِرْ لَنَا مَغْفِرَةَ الْاَحْبَابِ

ALLĀHUMMA-Gh-FIR LANĀ MAGhFIRAT-L-ʾAḤBĀB

Oh Allāh forgive us as You forgive those whom You Love

اَلَّتِي لَا تَدْعُ شَيْئًا مِنَ الْاِرْتِيَابِ

ALLĀTĪ LĀ ṬADAʿU ShĀYAN MĪA-L-IRTĪYĀBā

That which places nothing in suspicion

وَلَا يَبْقَى مَعَهَا شَيْءٌ مِنَ اللَّوْمِ وَالْعِتَابِ

WA LA YABĀQĀ MA‘AHĀ ShĀY‘UN MINA-L-LŌWMI WA-L-‘ITĀBĀ

and nothing remains from lamentation and blame

وَأَجْعَلْ مَا عَلِمْتَهُ فِيمَا وَ مِنَّا خَيْرَ مَعْلُومٍ بَعْدَ الْمَجْوَ وَ التَّثْبِتِ

WA-JĀ‘AL MĀ ‘ALIMTAH FĪMĀ WA MINNĀ KhĀYRA MA‘LŪM ..  
BA‘DA-L-MAḤWI WA-T-TATHĪBIT

and make what You have known in us and from us to be a known goodness  
after erasure and careful verification.



اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا كُلَّهَا  
دَقِيقَهَا وَ جَلِيلَهَا ، سَرَّهَا وَ عَلَانِيَّتَهَا ،  
أَوَّلَهَا وَ آخِرَهَا

ALLĀHUMMA-Gh-FIR LANĀ DhUNŪBUNĀ KULLĀHĀ  
DAQĪQAHĀ WA JALĪLA HĀSIRRAHA WA ‘ALĀNIYYATAHĀ  
‘AWWALAHĀ WA ĀĀKhĪRAHĀ

Oh Allāh forgive us all our faults:  
the little and the great — the secret and the known — the first and the last.

وَ اغْفِرْ لِمَنْ سَافَرَ عَنَّا مِنْ أَحِبَابِنَا سَفَرَ الدُّنْيَا أَوْ سَفَرَ الْآخِرَةِ  
وَ اجْعَلْ تَقَلُّبَهُمْ تَقَلُّبَ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَ إِيَابَهُمْ إِيَابَ الْفَائِزِينَ

WA-Gh-FIR LAMIN SĀFARA ‘ANNĀ MIN ‘AḤBĀBINA  
SĀFARA-D-DUNYĀ ‘ŌW SAFARA-L-‘ĀĀKhĪRAH  
WA-JĀ‘AL TAQALLUBAHUM TAQALLUBA-L-MUTTAQĪNA  
WA ‘IYĀBAHUM ‘IYĀBA-L-FĀ‘IZĪN

& forgive those travellers from amongst our beloveds  
who are travelling in this world or travelling in the last world  
and cause their wanderings to be the wanderings of God-fearers  
and their return the return of winners,

وَاجْعَلْنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ جَمِيعًا مِنَ الْمَقْبُولِينَ

WA-JāʿALNĀ BI-RAḤMATIKA JAMĪʿAM-MINA-L-MAQĀBŪLĪN

and cause us by Your Mercy — all of us — to be from the accepted ones,

وَإِنْ كُنَّا زَيْفِينَ فَإِنَّ النُّقَادَ يَسْمَحُونَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا عَارِفِينَ

WA ʾIN KUNNA ZAʾIFĪNA FAʾINNA-NUQĀDA YASMAḤŪNA WA ʾIN KĀNŪ ʿĀRIFĪN

and even if we are counterfeit, the examiners are indulgent, even though they know,

فَأَنْتَ أَوْلَ بِذَلِكَ فَإِنَّكَ أَكْرَمُ الْأَكْرَمِينَ

FAʾANTA ʾŌWLA BI-DḤALIKA FAʾINNAKA ʾAKRAMU-L-ʾAKRAMĪN

and You are the foremost of them and truly You are the Most Generous of the generous,

وَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

WA ʾARḤAMU-R-RĀḤIMĪN

Most Mercy Full of the merciful.

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْظَّهِيمِ

WA-L-ḤAMDU-LILLĀHI RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

WA LĀ ḤŌWLA WA LĀ QUWWATA ʾILLĀ BI-LLĀHI-L-ʿALIYYĪ-L-ʾADḤĪM

Praise to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

There is no power and no might except with Allāh, the Most High, The Sublime.



اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا تُخَيِّبْنَا وَ نَحْنُ نَرْجُوكَ وَ لَا تَحْرِمْنَا وَ نَحْنُ نَدْعُوكَ

ALLĀHUMMA LĀ TUKḤAYYIBĀNA WA NAḤNU NARJUWKA

WA LĀ TAḤRIMNĀ WA NAḤNU NADʿĀʾŌWK

Oh Allāh do not dash our hopes when we are hoping in You  
and do not deprive us when we are calling You.

وَ قَدْ دَعَوْنَاكَ كَمَا أَمَرْتَنَا فَاسْتَجِبْ لَنَا كَمَا وَ عَدْتَنَا

WA QADā DA'OWNĀKA KAMĀ 'AMARTINĀ  
FASTAJABA LANĀ KAMĀ WA'ADĀTANĀ

We have called to You as You ordered us so answer us as You have promised us.

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ تَضَرُّعَنَا هَيْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَ غَيْرَ مَقْبُولٍ

WA LĀ TAJĀ'AL TADARRU'NĀ HAYYINAN 'ALAYKA WA GhĀYRA MAQĀBŪL

Do not make our appeals to You futile and unacceptable.

وَ كَمَا يَسَّرْتَ لَنَا الدُّعَاءَ فَيَسِّرْ لَنَا الْإِجَابَةَ

WA KAMĀ YASSARTA LANĀ-D-DU'A'I FA YASSIR LANĀ-L-'IJĀBAH

And as You have made our calling easy so make our answers easy.

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA 'ALĀ KULLI ShĀY'IN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things.*

{3:26}

وَمِنْ ذِكْرِهِ وَ دَعَائِهِ

from his remembrance & supplication

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ . لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

YĀ HAYYU YĀ QAYYŪM — LĀ 'ILĀHA 'ILLĀ 'ANTA

Oh Ever Living, Oh Self Subsisting — There is no deity other than You.

كُنْ لِي بِحَيَاتِكَ كَمَا كُنْتَ لِأَحِبَّابِكَ

KUN LĪ BI-HAYĀTIKA KAMĀ KUNTA LI-'AḤBĀBIK

Be for me by Your Life as You were for Your Beloved



وَأَمِتْنِي عَنِّي بِصِفَاتِكَ كَمَا فَعَلْتَ بِأَصْفِيَاتِكَ

WA 'AMITNĪ 'ANNĪ BI-ṢIFĀTIKA KAMĀ FA'ALTA BI-'AṢFIYĀTIK-

and cause 'me' to die with Your Qualities as You did Your Chosen,  
{blessings and peace be upon him}

وَأَجْعَلْنِي قَيُّومًا بِذَلِكَ بِالْعِصْمَةِ مِنْ غَيْرِكَ كَمَا فَعَلْتَ بِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِكَ

WA-JĀ-'ALNĪ QAYYŪMĀM BI-DhĀLIKA BI-L-'ISMATI MIN GhAYRIK  
KAMĀ FA'ALTA BI-MUḤAMMADIŅ RASŪLIK

and make me to be self-subsistent so that I might be preserved from other than You  
as You did with Your Messenger, Muḥammad.  
{blessings and peace be upon him}

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA 'ALĀ KULLI ShAY'IN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things.*  
{3:26}

إِلَهِي إِذَا طَلَبْتُ مِنْكَ الْقُوَّةَ فَقَدْ طَلَبْتُ غَيْرَكَ

'ILĀHĪ! 'IDhĀ ṬALABĀTU MINKA-L-QŪTA FAQADĀ ṬALABĀTU GhARIK

Oh My Allāh! If I ask from You my nourishment then I would be asking some one else,

وَإِنْ سَأَلْتُكَ مَا ضَمَنْتَ لِي فَقَدْ أَتَّهَمْتُكَ

WA 'IN SA'ALTUKA MĀ DAMANTA LĪ FAQADĀ-T-TAHAMṬUK

and if I ask You for what You have guaranteed then I would be accusing You.

وَإِنْ سَكَنَ قَلْبِي إِلَى غَيْرِكَ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكْتُ بِكَ

WA 'IN SAKAN QALBĪ 'ILA GhAYRIKA FAQADĀ 'AShURAKTU BIK

and if my heart is made peaceful by an other then I would be making an other to be Your partner.

جَلَّتْ أَوْصَافُكَ عَنِ الْحُدُوثِ فَكَيْفَ أَكُونُ مَعَكَ؟

JALLĀT'ŌWṢĀFUK 'ANI-L-ḤUDŪTHI FAKAYFA 'AKŪNU MA'AK

The sublimity of Your Qualities is above occurring phenomena, so how can I be 'with' You?

وَ تَنْزَهَتْ عَنِ الْعِلَالِ فَكَيْفَ أَكُونُ قَرِيبًا مِنْكَ؟

WA TANAZZAHTA 'ANI-L-'ILALI FAKAYFA 'AKŪNŪ QARĪBAM-MINK

and { Your Qualities } are untouched by causality so how can I be 'near' You?

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَسْأَلُكَ تَوْحِیْدًا لَا نَنْفِیْ بِهٖ ضِدًّا وَ یَقِیْنًا لَا نَدْفَعُ بِهٖ شَكًّا

ALLĀHUMMA 'INNĪ 'AS'ALUKA TŌWHĪDAL-LĀ NANFĪ BIHI DIDDAN

WA YAQĪNAL-LA TADĀFA'U BIHI SHĀKĀ

Oh Allāh, I ask You for Oneness that is not negated by its contrary  
and Certainty that is not overcome by doubt.

و من دعائه لضيق الحال

a supplication when in the state of need

He taught this du'ā' to his companions who were needy {*daiqah*} and they found prosperity

يَا وَاسِعُ يَا عَلِيمُ يَا ذَا الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

YĀ WĀSI'U YĀ 'ALĪMU YĀ DHĀ-L-FADLI-L-ADHĪM

Oh Vast, Oh Knower of All, Oh Possessor of Sublime Abundance.

أَنْتَ رَبِّي وَ عِلْمُكَ حَسْبِي

'ANTA RABBĪ WA 'ILUMKA ḤASBĪ

You are my Lord and Your Knowledge is my sufficiency.

إِنْ يَمْسَسْنِ بَضْرٌ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا أَنْتَ  
وَإِنْ تُرِدْنِ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِكَ

ʾIN-Y-YAMSASNI BI-ḌURRIN FALĀ KĀSHIFA LAHU ʾILLA ʾANTA  
WĀ ʾIN TURIDNI BI-KhAYRIN FALA RĀDA-L-FADLIK

If You touch me with adversity there is no cure but You.  
and if You wish goodness for me there is no one to avert Your Generosity.

تُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ وَأَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

TUṢĪBU BIHI MAN TASHAʾU MIN ʿIBĀDIK WA ʾANTA-L-GhAFŪRU-R-RAḤĪM

You pour it out on whom You will of Your worshipful slaves  
and You are the Forgiving, the Bestower of Mercy.



اَللّٰهُمَّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنَ النُّوْرِ الَّذِي رَأَى بِهِ رَسُوْلُكَ صَلَّى اَللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ  
مَا كَانَ وَ يَكُوْنُ

ALLĀHUMMA HABĀ LĪ MINA-N-NŪRI-L-LADhĪ RAʿAY BIHI RASŪLŪK  
— ṢALLA-LLĀHU ʿALAYHI WA SALLAM —  
MA KĀNA WA YAKŪN

Oh Allāh, grant me from the Light by which Your Messenger saw,  
blessings and peace be upon him,  
what was and what will be.

لِيَكُوْنَ الْعَبْدُ بِوَصْفِ سَيِّدِهِ لَا بِوَصْفِ نَفْسِهِ

LI-YAKŪNA-L-ʿABĀDU BI-WAṢFI SAYYIDAHI LĀ BI-WAṢFI NAFSIH

so that the worshipper 'is' by the attributes of his liege-lord  
and not by the attributes of his own 'self',

غَنِيًّا بِكَ عَنْ تَجْدِيْدَاتِ النَّظَرِ لِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْمَعْلُوْمَاتِ

GhĀNIYYAM BIKĀ ʿAN TAJĀDĪDĀTI-N-NADhARI LI-ShAYʾIN MINA-L-MAʿLŪMĀT  
enriched by You on the basis of the restoration of the vision of things from known perceptions,

وَ مُحِيطًا بِذَاتِ السِّرِّ بِجَمِيعِ أَنْوَاعِ الذَّوَاتِ

WA MUHĪṬAM BI-DhATI-S-SIRRI BI-JAMĪI' ANWA'I-Dh-DhAWWĀT

and encompassed by the secret essence contained in the diversity of essences,

وَ مُرَتَّبًا لِلْبَدَنِ مَعَ النَّفْسِ وَ الْقَلْبِ مَعَ الْعَقْلِ

WA MURATTIBAL-LI-L-BADANI MA'A-NAFSI WA-L-QALBI MA'-L-'AQĀL

and regulated in the body with the company of the self-soul and the heart and the intellect,

وَ لِلرُّوحِ مَعَ السِّرِّ وَ لِلْأَمْرِ مَعَ الْبَصِيرَةِ

WA LI-R-RŪHI MA'A-S-SIRRI WA-L-'AMRLI MA'A-L-BAṢĪRAH

and the spirit in the company of the secret and the order in the company of the vision,

وَ الْعَقْلِ الْأَوَّلِ الْمُمِدِّ مِنَ الرُّوحِ الْأَكْبَرِ الْمُنْفَصِلِ عَنِ السِّرِّ الْأَعْلَى

WA-L-'AQĀLI-L-'ÖWWALI-L-MUMIDDI MIR-R-RŪHI-

-L-'AKBARI-L-MUNFAṢILI 'ANI-S-SIRRI-L-'A'LĀ

and the First Intelligence reinforced by the Great Spirit emanating from the High Secret.



اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا تَتَوَسَّلُ اِلَيْكَ . اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اُقْسِمُ بِكَ عَلَيْكَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ كَمَا كُنْتَ دَلِيْلِيْ عَلَيْكَ فَكُنْ شَفِيْعِيْ اِلَيْكَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ حَسَنَاتِيْ مِنْ عَطَائِكَ

وَ سَيِّئَاتِيْ مِنْ قَضَائِكَ

ALLĀHUMMA 'INNA TATAWASSALU 'ILAYK

ALLĀHUMMA 'INĪ 'UQĀSIMU BIKA 'ALAYK

ALLĀHUMMA KAMĀ KUNTA DALĪLĪ 'ALAYKA FA-KUN ShĀFĪ'I 'ILAYK

ALLĀHUMMA 'INNA ḤASANĀTĪ MIN 'AṬĀ'IK

WA SAYYI'ĀTĪ MIN QADĀ'IK

Oh Allāh, we appeal to You with You • Oh Allāh, I swear by You upon You,  
Oh Allāh, as You have been my guide to You so be my intercessor with You,  
Oh Allāh, my good deeds are by Your Grant; and my evil deeds from Your Decree.



فَجُدْ اَللّٰهُمَّ بِمَا اُطِيتَ عَلٰى مَا بِهٖ قَضَيْتَ حَتّٰى يَمْحُوْ ذٰلِكَ بِذٰلِكَ

FAJUDā ALLĀHUMMA BIMĀ ḌATAYTA ḌALA MĀ BIHI QADAYTA  
HATTA YAMHŪ DhĀLIKA BI-DhĀLIK

Regenerate {us}, oh Allāh, by what You Grant over what You Decree,  
so that You erase that by that.

لَا لِمَنْ اَطَاعَكَ فِيمَا اَطَاعَكَ فِيْهِ لَهُ الشُّكْرُ  
وَلَا لِمَنْ عَصَاكَ فِيمَا عَصَاكَ فِيْهِ لَهُ الْعَذْرُ

LĀ LI-MAN ḌATĀḌAKA FĪMĀ ḌATĀḌAKA FĪHI LAHU-Sh-ShUKR  
WA LĀ LI-MAN ḌAṢĀKA FĪMĀ ḌAṢĀKA FIHI LAHU-L-ḌADhR

No one who obeys You is to be thanked on account of obedience to You;  
and no one who dis-obeyes You can be excused for dis-obeying You.

لَآنَّكَ قُلْتَ وَ قَوْلُكَ الْحَقُّ

LI-ANNAKA QULTA WA QŌWLUKA-L-ḤAQQ

Because You have said and Your Saying is the Truth:

لَا يَسْئَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَ هُمْ يُسْئَلُونَ

LĀ YASḌALU ḌAMMĀ YAFḌALU WA HUM YUSḌALŪN

*He will not be questioned as to what He does but they shall be questioned.*

{21:23}



اَللّٰهُمَّ لَوْلَا عَطَاؤُكَ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْهَالِكِيْنَ

ALLĀHUMMA LŌWLĀ ḌATĀḌUKA LAKUNTU MINA-L-HĀLIKĪN

Oh Allāh, if not for Your Gifts I would have been amongst the annihilated;

وَ لَوْلَا قَضَاؤُكَ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْفَائِزِيْنَ

WA LŌWLĀ QADĀḌUKA LAKUNTU MINA-L-FĀḌIZĪN

and if not for Your Decrees I would have been amongst the winners.

وَأَنْتَ أَجَلُّ وَأَعْظَمُ وَأَعَزُّ وَأَكْرَمُ  
مَنْ أَنْ تُطَاعَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِكَ وَرِضَاكَ أَوْ يُعْصَى إِلَّا بِحُكْمِكَ وَقَضَائِكَ

WA'ANTA 'AJĀLLU WA'A'DĥAMU WA'A'ZZU WA'AKRAMU  
MIN'AN TUṬĀ'A 'ILLĀ BI-IDĥNIKA WA RIDĀKA  
'ŌW YU'ṢĀ 'ILLĀ BI-HUKMIKA WA QADĀ'IK

And You are More Exalted and More Sublime and More Powerful and More Generous  
than to be obeyed other than by Your Permission and by Your Contentment  
or dis-obeyed except by Your Order and by Your Decree.



إِلَهَ مَا أَطَعْتُكَ حَتَّى رَضِيتَ  
وَلَا عَصَيْتُكَ حَتَّى قَضَيْتَ

'ILĀHI MĀ 'AṬĀ'TUKA ḤATTA RAḌĪT  
WA LĀ 'AṢAYTUKA ḤATTA QADĀYT

Oh my Allāh, I have not obeyed You in order that You be content  
and I did not dis-obey You in order that You might judge.

أَطَعْتُكَ بِإِرَادَتِكَ وَالْمِنَّةُ لَكَ عَلَيَّ  
وَعَصَيْتُكَ بِتَقْدِيرِكَ وَالْحُجَّةُ لَكَ عَلَيَّ

'AṬĀ'TUKA BI-IRĀDĀTIKA WA-L-MINNATU LAKA 'ALAYYA  
WA 'AṢAYTUKA BI-TAQĀDĪRIKĀ WA-L-ḤUJJATU LAKA 'ALAYYA

I obeyed You by Your Will and the Bestowal from You is upon me;  
I dis-obeyed You by Your Decree and the Evidence from You is upon me.

فَبِوُجُوبِ حُجَّتِكَ وَأَنْقِطَاعِ حُجَّتِي إِلَّا مَا رَحِمْتَنِي  
وَبِفِقْرِي إِلَيْكَ وَغِنَاكَ عَنِّي إِلَّا مَا كَفَيْتَنِي

FA-BI-WŪJŪBI ḤUJJATIKA WA-N-QITĀ'I ḤUJJATĪ 'ILLĀ MĀ RAḤMITANĪ  
WA BI-FIQĀRI 'ILAYKA WA ḠINĀKA 'ANNĪ 'ILLĀ MĀ KAFAYTANĪ

So by the inevitability of Your Evidence and the absence of my evidence You are merciful to me,  
and by my dependence on You and Your Independence of me You provide for my sufficiency.

يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

YĀ 'ARĤAMA-R-RĀĤMĪN

Oh Most Mercy Full of the merciful.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّى لَمْ اَتِ الذُّنُوْبَ جُرْأَةً مِنْ عَليْكَ وَ لَا اَسْتِخْفَا فَا بِحَقِّكَ

ALLĀHUMMA 'INI LAM ĀĀTI-Dh-DhUNŪBA JUR'ATAM-MINNI 'ALAYKA  
WA LA-S-TIKhFĀFAM BI-ĤAQQIK

Oh Allāh, I have not done wrong in defiance of You or by belittling Your Rights,

وَ لَكِنْ جَرَى بِذَلِكَ قَلَمُكَ . وَ نَفَذَ بِهِ حُكْمُكَ

WA LĀKIN JARĀ BI-DhALIKA QALAMUK • WA NAFADhA BIHI ḤUKMIK

but rather it was in accord with the flow of Your Pen and the realization of Your Judgment.

وَ لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ وَ اَلْعُذْرُ اِلَيْكَ

WA LĀ HŌWLA WA LĀ QUWWATA 'ILLĀ BI-KA WA-L-'UDhRU 'ILAYK

and the fulfillment of Your Judgment;

وَ اَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

WA 'ANTA 'ARĤAMU-R-RĀĤMĪN

and You are Most Mercy Full of the merciful.



اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّى سَمِعِى وَ بَصَرِى وَ لِسَانِى وَ قَلْبِى وَ عَقْلِى بِيَدِكَ

ALLĀHUMMA

'INNA SAM'IYA WA BAṢARIYA WA LISĀNĪ WA QALBĪ WA 'AQĀLI BI-YADIK

Oh Allāh,

my hearing and my vision and my tongue and my heart and my intelligence are in Your Hand.

لَمْ تَمْلِكْنِي مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا

LAM TUMALLIKNĪ MIN DhĀLIKA ShĀYĀ

You have not made me to be the ruler of any thing from amongst them.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتَ بِشَيْءٍ فَكُنْ أَنْتَ وَلِيٌّ

FA-IDĤA QADAYTA BI-ShĀYIN FA-KUN ANTA WALIYYI

So if You have decreed any thing then be my Supporting Friend,

وَأَهْدِنِي إِلَى أَقْوَمِ السَّبِيلِ يَا خَيْرَ مَنْ سُئِلَ وَيَا أَكْرَمَ مَنْ أُعْطِيَ

WA-H-DINĪ ILĀ AQWAMI-S-SUBULI YĀ KhĀYRA MIN SUIL

WA YĀ AKRAMA MAN A'ṬAYĀ

and Guide me to the straightest way, oh Best of Respondents and oh Most Generous of givers.

يَا رَحْمَنَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ • أَرْحَمَ عَبْدًا لَا يَمْلِكُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا الْآخِرَةَ

YĀ RAĤMĀNA-D-DUNYĀ WA-L-ĀĀKhIRAH

ARĤAM ABDAL-LĀ YAMLUKU-D-DUNYĀ WALĀĀKhIRAH

Oh Mercy Full in this world and the last.

Be merciful to this slave who possesses nothing in this world or the last.

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA ALĀ KULLI ShĀYIN QADĪR

Truly You have power over all things.

{3:26}





◦Adhkār wa ʿAdʿiyah ◦

و قال الشيخ، رضى الله عنه

And the Shaykh, may Allāh be content with him, said:

« بت ذات ليلة فى غم عظيم فإلهمت أن أقول: »

“One night I was plagued with great distress in my sleep and I was inspired to say,

إِلَهِي مَنَنْتَ عَلَيَّ بِإِيمَانٍ وَ الْمَحَبَّةِ وَ الطَّاعَةِ وَ التَّوْحِيدَةِ

ʾILĀHĪ

MANANTA ʿALAYYA BPĪMĀNI WA-L-MAḤABBATI WA-Ṭ-ṬĀʿATI WA-T-TŌWHĪDAH

Oh my Allāh,

You have endowed me with faith and love and obedience and unity.

فَأَحَاطَتْ بِي الْغَفْلَةُ وَ الشَّهْوَةُ وَ الْمَعْصِيَةُ

FAʾAHĀṬAT BIYA-L-GhĀFLATU WA-Sh-ShĀHWATU WA-L-MAʿSIYAH

I am encompassed by mindlessness and lust and rebellion.

وَ طَرَحَتْنِي النَّفْسُ فِي بَحْرِ الظُّلْمِ، فَهِيَ مُظْلِمَةٌ

WA ṬARAHATNĪ -N-NAFS FĪ BAḤRI-Dh-DhULM — FAHIYA MUḌḥLIMAH

My ‘self’ has thrown me into the sea of oppression — and it is dark.

وَ عَبْدُكَ مَحْزُونٌ مَهْمُومٌ مَغْمُومٌ

WA ʿABĀDUKA MAḤZŪNUM MAHMŪMUM MAGḥMŪM

Your slave is sad, depressed and distressed

وَ قَدْ أَلْتَقَمَهُ نُونُ الْهَوَىٰ

WA QADĀ AT-TAQAMATU NŪNU-L-HŌWĀ

and he has been swallowed by the whale of desire.

وَهُوَ يُنَادِيكَ نِدَاءَ الْمَعْصُومِ نَبِيِّكَ وَعَبْدِكَ يُونُسَ بْنِ مَتَّى  
وَيَقُولُ:

« لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ »

WA HUWA YUNĀDĪKA

NIDĀ' A-L-MA'ṢŪMI NABIYYIKA WA 'ABĀDIKA YUNŪS BIN MATTA

WA YAQŪL

LA 'ILĀHA 'ILLĀ 'ANTA — SUBĤANAKA — 'INNI KUNTU MINA-DĤ-DĤALIMĪN

and he is calling You

by the cry of Your Immaculate Prophet and slave, Yunus, the son of Matta,  
who said,

*"There is no deity save You — Praise be to You — I have been of the benighted oppressors."*

{21:87}

فَاسْتَجِبْ لِي كَمَا اسْتَجَبْتَ لَهُ

FA-S-TAJIBĀ LĪ KAMĀ-S-TAJABĀTA LAHU

So answer me as You did answer him,

وَأَنْبُذْنِي بِعَرَاءِ الْمَحَبَّةِ فِي مَحَلِّ التَّوْحِيدِ وَالْوَحْدَةِ

WA-N-BUDĤNĪ BI-'ARĀ'I-L-MAĤABBATI FĪ MAĤALI-T-TŌWHĪD WA-L-WAĤDAH

and cast me into the nakedness of love in the station of unity and oneness,

وَأَنْبَتْ عَلَيَّ أَشْجَارَ اللَّطْفِ وَالْحَنَانِ

WA-N-BAT'ALAYYA 'ASHJĀRA-L-LUṬFI WA-L-ĤANĀN

and germinate within me the trees of merciful kindness and compassionate tenderness.

إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْمَنَّانُ

'INNAKA 'ANTA-LLĀHU-L-MALIKU-L-MANNĀN

Truly You are Allāh, The Sovereign, The Gracious Benefactor,

وَلَيْسَ لِي إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَحْدُكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

WA LAYSA LĪ ʾILLA ʾANTA WAḤDUKA LĀ ShARĪKA LAK

and I have none but You, One without a partner,

وَلَسْتَ بِمُخْلَفٍ وَعَدَكَ لِمَنِ آمَنَ بِكَ

WA LASTA BI-MUKḤLIFĪN WAʿDAKA LIMAN ʾĀĀMANA BIK

and You will not fail Your Promise with those who faithfully believe in You

إِذْ قُلْتَ وَ قَوْلُكَ الْحَقُّ:

فَاسْتَحَبَّنَا لَهُ، وَ نَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَ كَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

ʾIDh QULTA WA QŌWLUKA-L-HAQQā;

FĀ-S-TAJABĀNA LAHŪ WA NAJJAYNĀHU MINA-L-GḤAMM

WA KADḤĀLIKA NUŖJĪ-L-MUʾMINĪN

You said, and Your Word is The Truth:

*So We answered him and delivered him from grief — and thus do We deliver the believers.*

{21:88}

يَا إِلَٰهَ يَا جَمِيلُ يَا جَلِيلُ اللَّطْفِ

YĀ ALLĀHU YĀ JAMĪLU YĀ JALĪLU-L-LUṬF

Oh Allāh, Oh Beauty Full, Oh Exalted Kindness.

الْطُّفْ بِي فِي لُطْفِكَ الَّذِي لُطِفْتَ بِهِ لِأَوْلِيَائِكَ

AL-ṬUF BĪ FĪ LUṬFIKA-L-LADḤĪ LUṬAFTA BIHI LI-L-ʾŌWLIĀʾIK

Be tender with me by that tenderness with which You were tender with Your Friends

وَ أَنْصُرْنِي بِالرُّعْبِ الشَّدِيدِ عَلَى أَعْدَائِكَ

WA-N-ṢURNĪ BI-R-RUʿBI-Shġ-ShADĪDI ʿALA ʾAʿDĀʾIK

and grant me victory over Your enemies by Your intense terror .

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA 'ALĀ KULLI SHĀY'IN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things.*

{3:26}



و من دعائه

from his supplications

يَا أَلَلَّهُ يَا فَتَّاحُ يَا عَلِيمُ يَا غَنِيُّ يَا كَرِيمُ

YĀ ALLĀHU YĀ FATTĀHU YĀ 'ALĪMU YĀ GhANIYYU YĀ KARĪM

Oh Allāh, The Opener, The All Knowing, The Truly Rich, The Generous.

أَفْتَحْ قَلْبِي بِنُورِكَ ،  
وَّ أَرْحَنِي بِطَاعَتِكَ ، وَ أَحْجِبْنِي عَنْ مَعْصِيَتِكَ ،  
وَّ آمَنْنُ عَلَى بِمَعْرِفَتِكَ ،

AFTAḤ QALBĪ BI-NŪRIK

WA-R-ḤAMNĪ BI-TĀ'ATIK WA-Ḥ-JABĀNĪ 'AN MA'ṢIYATIK

WA-M-NUN 'ALAYYA BI-MA'RIFATIK

Open my heart with Your Light.

Grant me the mercy of obeying You and veil me from rebellion against You.

Bestow upon me knowledge of You,

وَ أَغْنِنِي بِقُدْرَتِكَ عَنْ قُدْرَتِي

WA-Gh-NANĪ BI-QUDĀRATIKA 'AN QUDĀRATĪ

and enrich me by Your Power over my power



وَبِعِلْمِكَ عَنْ عِلْمِي، وَبِإِرَادَتِكَ عَنْ إِرَادَتِي،  
 وَبِحَيَاتِكَ عَنْ حَيَاتِي، وَبِصِفَاتِكَ عَنْ صِفَاتِي،  
 وَبِوُجُودِكَ عَنْ وُجُودِي، وَبِدُونُوكَ عَنْ دُنُوِّي،  
 وَبِقُرْبِكَ عَنْ قُرْبِي، وَبِحُبِّكَ عَنْ حُبِّي،  
 وَبِصَدَقَّتِكَ عَنْ صِدْقِي، وَبِحِفْظِكَ عَنْ حِفْظِي،  
 وَبِنَظْرِكَ عَنْ نَظْرِي، وَبِتَدْبِيرِكَ عَنْ تَدْبِيرِي،  
 وَبِاخْتِيَارِكَ عَنْ اخْتِيَارِي،

WA BI-‘ILMIKA ‘AN ‘ILMĪ WA BI-‘IRADATIKA ‘AN ‘IRADATĪ  
 WA BI HAYĀTIKA ‘AN HAYĀTĪ WA BI-ŞIFĀTIKA ‘AN ŞIFĀTĪ  
 WA BI-WUJŪDIKA ‘AN WUJŪDĪ WA BI-DŪNŪWWIKA ‘AN DUNUWWĪ  
 WA BI-QURBIKA ‘AN QURBĪ WA BI-ḤUBBIKA ‘AN ḤUBBĪ  
 WA BI-ŞIDĀQIKA ‘AN ŞIDĀQĪ WA BI-ḤIFḌHIKA ‘AN ḤIFḌHĪ  
 WA BI-NADḤARIKA ‘AN NADḤARĪ WA BI-TADĀBIRIKA ‘AN TADĀBĪRĪ  
 WA BI-Kh-TIYARIKA ‘AN IKhTIYĀR

and by Your Knowledge over my knowledge and by Your Will over my will  
 and by Your Life over my life and by Your Qualities over my qualities .  
 and by Your Existence over my existence and by Your Presence over my presence  
 and by Your Nearness over my nearness and by Your Love over my love-  
 and by Your Truthfulness over my truthfulness and by Your Protection over my protection  
 and by Your Vision over my vision and by Your Planning over my planning  
 and by Your Choice over my choice

وَبِحَوْلِكَ وَ قُوَّتِكَ عَنْ حَوْلِي وَ قُوَّتِي  
 وَ بِجُودِكَ وَ كَرَمِكَ وَ فَضْلِكَ وَ رَحْمَتِكَ عَنْ عِلْمِي وَ عَمَلِي

WA BI-ḤŌWLIKA WA QUWWATIKA ‘AN ḤŌWLI WA QUWWATĪ  
 WA BI-JŪDIKA WA KARAMIKA WA FADLIKA WA RAḤMATIKA ‘AN ‘ILMĪ WA ‘AMALĪ

and by Your Power and Might over my power and might  
 and by Your Magnanimity and Bounty over my knowledge and action.

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA ‘ALĀ KULLI ShĀY’IN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things.*

وقال  
and he said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حَقِيْرَةٌ مَا فِيْهَا وَ اِنَّ الْاٰخِرَةَ كَرِيْمَةٌ، كَرِيْمٌ مَا فِيْهَا

ALLĀHUMMA ṬINNA-D-DUNYĀ ḤAQĪRATUM MĀ FĪHĀ  
WA ṬINNA-L-ĀĀKHĪRATA KARIMAH •  
KARIMAH MĀ FĪHĀ

Oh Allāh, the world is base and all that is in it and the last world is noble and what is in it is noble,

وَ اَنْتَ الَّذِيْ حَقَّرْتَ الْحَقِيْرَ وَ كَرَّمْتَ الْكَرِيْمَ

WA ṬANTĀ-Ī-L-LADHĪ ḤAQQARTA-L-ḤAQĪRA WA KARRAMTA-L-KARĪM

and You it is Who made base the base and noble the noble.

فَاَنْىَ يَكُوْنُ كَرِيْمًا مَنْ طَلَبَ غَيْرَكَ  
أَمْ كَيْفَ يَكُوْنُ زَاهِدًا مَنْ آخَتَرَ لِدُنْيَاهُ غَيْرَكَ

FA-ṬANNĀ YAKŪN KARĪMĀM-MAN ṬALABA GHĀYRAK  
ṬAM KAYFA YAKŪNU ZĀHIDAM-MAN ṬAKḤTĀRA LI-DUNYĀHU GHĀYRAK

So how can anyone be noble who seeks other than You?  
And how can anyone be an ascetic who in his worldly life chooses other than You?

فَحَقِّقْنِيْ بِحَقَائِقِ الزُّهْدِ حَتَّى اَسْتَغْنَى بِكَ عَنْ طَلَبِ غَيْرِكَ

FA-ḤAQQIQNĪ BI-ḤAQĀIKI-Z-ZUHDI ḤATTA-S-TAGḤNA BIKA ṬAN TALBI GHĀYRAK

So substantiate me in the realization of the Reality of asceticism  
until I am free from seeking other than You.

وَ بِمَعْرِفَتِكَ حَتَّى لَا اَحْتَاجَ اِلَى طَلَبِكَ

WA BI-MAṬRIFATIKA ḤATTA LĀ ṬAḤTĀJA ṬILĀ ṬALABIK

and by True Knowledge until there is no need to ask from You.

إِلَهِي كَيْفَ يَصِلُ إِلَيْكَ مَنْ طَلَبَكَ  
أَمْ كَيْفَ يَفُوتُكَ مَنْ هَرَبَ مِنْكَ

ʾILLAHĪ KAYFA YAṢILU ʾILAYKA MAN ṬALABIKA  
ʾAM KAYFA YAFŪTUKA MAN HARABA MINK

My Allāh, how can anyone reach You who has sought You  
or how can anyone escape You when they flee You?

فَاطْلُبْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ وَلَا تَطْلُبْنِي بِنِقْمَتِكَ يَا عَزِيزُ يَا مُنْتَقِمُ

FA-ṬĀ-LUBĀNĪ BI-RAḤMATIKA WA LĀ TUṬĀLUBĀNĪ BI-NIQĀMATIKA  
YĀ ʿĀZĪZU YĀ MUNTAQĪM

So exact from me by Your Mercy and do not seek restitution from me by Your Vengeance.  
Oh Invincible — Oh Avenger

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA ʿALĀ KULLI ShĀYʾIN QADĪR

Truly You have power over all things.  
{3:26}



اللَّهُمَّ اسْلُبْنِي عَقْلاً يَحْجُبُنِي عَنْكَ  
وَعَنْ فَهْمَ آيَاتِكَ وَعَنْ فَهْمَ كَلَامِ رَسُولِكَ  
وَهَبْ لِي مِنَ الْعَقْلِ الَّذِي خَصَصْتَ بِهِ أَنْبِيََاءَكَ وَرَسُولَكَ  
وَالصَّادِقِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ

ALLĀHUMMA-S-LUBĀNĪ ʿAQLAṆY-YAHJUBĀNĪ ʿANKA  
WA ʿAN FAHMI ĀĀYĀTIKA-WA ʿAN FAHMI KALĀMI RASŪLIK  
WA HABĀLI MINA-L-ʿAQĀLI-L-LADhĪ KhAṢAṢTA BIHI ʾAMBIĀʾIKA WA RASŪLAKA  
WA-Ṣ-ṢADIQĪNA MIN ʿIBĀDIK

Oh Allāh strip me of the mind that veils me from You and from the understanding of Your Signs<sup>5</sup>  
and the understanding of the words of Your Messenger.  
And grant me from the intelligence that You reserved for Your Prophets and Messengers  
and the Truth-full from amongst Your Slaves;  
{blessings and peace be upon them all}

<sup>5</sup> al-Qurʾān

وَ أَهْدِنِي بِنُورِكَ هِدَايَةَ الْمُخَصَّصِينَ بِمَشِيئَتِكَ

WA-H-DANĪ BI-NŪRIKA HIDĀYATA-L-MUKḤAṢṢAṢĪNA BI-MASHĪ'ATIK

and guide me by the Light of Guidance {by which You guide} the elite chosen by Your Wishes;

وَ وَسِّعْ لِي فِي النُّورِ تَوْسِعَةً كَامِلَةً تَخْصُنِي بِهَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ

WA WASSI' LĪ FĪ-N-NŪRI TŌWSI'ATAN KĀMILATAN

TAKḤUSSUNĪ BIHĀ BI-RAḤMATIK

and make vast the Light for me so as to encompass me completely by Your Mercy.

فَإِنَّ الْهُدَى هُذَاكَ وَإِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِكَ تُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ تَشَاءُ  
وَ أَنْتَ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

FA'INNA-L-HUDĀ HUDĀKA WA 'INNA-L-FADLA BI-YADIKĀ TU'TĪHI MAN TASHĀ'

WA 'ANTA DHŪ FADLI-L-'ADḤĪM

Truly the guidance is Your Guidance  
and truly the graciousness from Your Hand is granted to whom You Choose  
and Yours is the Highest Graciousness.



يَا عَزِيزُ يَا رَحِيمُ يَا حَكِيمُ يَا غَنِيُّ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا وَاسِعُ  
يَا ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

YĀ 'AZĪZU YĀ RAḤĪMU YĀ ḤAKĪMU YĀ GHĀNIYYU KARĪMU YA WĀSĪ'U

YĀ DHŪ FADLI-L-'ADḤĪM

Oh Invincible, Oh Mercy Bestower, Oh All-Wise, Oh Endlessly Wealthy, Oh Generous, Oh Vast  
Oh Highest Graciousness.

أَجْعَلْنِي عِنْدَكَ دَائِمًا، وَ بِكَ قَائِمًا، وَ مِنْ غَيْرِكَ سَالِمًا  
وَ فِي حُبِّكَ هَائِمًا، وَ بِعَظَمَتِكَ عَالِمًا

'A-JĀ-'ALNĪ 'INDAKĀ DĀ'IMĀ — WA BIKĀ QĀ'IMĀ — WA MIN GHĀYRIKA SĀLIMĀ

WA FĪ ḤUBBIKA HĀ'IMĀ — WA BI-'ADḤAMATIK 'ĀLIMĀ

Make me to be always with You — Steadfastly with You — Safely from other than You  
Ecstatically in Your Love — In the Sublimity of Your Knowledge.



وَاسْقِطْ الْبَيْنَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ حَتَّى لَا يَكُونَ شَيْءٌ أَقْرَبَ إِلَيَّ مِنْكَ  
وَلَا تَحْجِبْنِي بِكَ عَنْكَ

WA-S-QITā AL-BAYNA BAYNI WA BAYNAK  
ḤATTĀ LĀ YAKŪNA ShĀY'IN 'AQĀRABA 'ILA MINK  
WA LĀ TAḤJIBNĪ BIK 'ANK

And drop the in-between between You and between me  
until there is no thing closer to me than You.  
And do not veil me by You from You.

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

INNAKA 'ALĀ KULLI ShĀY'IN QADĪR

*Truly You have power over all things.*  
{3:26}



يَا اللَّهُ يَا حَمِيدٌ يَا مُجِيدٌ، يَا اللَّهُ يَا كَرِيمٌ يَا رَحِيمٌ،  
يَا اللَّهُ يَا قَوِيٌّ يَا مَتِينٌ

YĀ ALLĀHU YĀ ḤAMĪDU YĀ MAJĪD — YĀ ALLĀHU YĀ KARĪMU YĀ RAḤĪM  
YĀ ALLĀHU YĀ QŌWWIYU YĀ MATĪN

Oh Allāh, Oh Praiseworthy, Oh Glorious — Oh Allāh, Oh Bountiful, Oh Bestower of Mercy  
Oh Allāh, Oh Strong, Oh Firm.

هَبْ لِي مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ مَا أَحْمَدُكَ بِهِ، فَأَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
وَأَرْزُقْنِي مِنْ لَطَائِفِ الْعِزِّ مَا أَكُونُ بِهِ قَوِيًّا مَتِينًا  
حَامِلًا مَحْمُولًا فِي الْعَالَمِينَ

HAB LĪ MIR-RAḤMATIKA MĀ 'AḤMADUKA BIHI FA'AKŪNA MINA-L-MU'MINĪN  
WA-R-ZUQĀNĪ MIL-LATĀ'IFI-L-'IZZI MĀ 'AKŪNU BIHI QŌWIYYAM-MATĪNAN  
ḤĀMILAM-MAḤMŪLAN FĪ-L-'ĀLAMĪN

Grant me from Your Mercy that by which I may thank You and by which I may be a believer.  
Enrich me from the Subtle Mercy of Your Might that I might be by it powerful, firm,  
carrying and carried in all the worlds.

وَهَبْ لِي مِنْ كَرَمِكَ مَا أَكُونُ بِهِ بَرًّا نَقِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ  
يَا رَحِيمُ يَا لَطِيفُ

WA HABĀ LĪ MIN KARIMIKA  
MĀ 'AKŪNU BIHI BARRAN NAQIYYAM-MINA-Ş-ŞĀLIHĪN  
YĀ RAHĪMU YĀ LATĪF

And grant me from Your Bounty  
that by which I may be of the righteous and pure amongst the good doers.  
Oh Mercy Full, Oh Tender Mercy .

الْطُّفُ بِي لُطْفًا لَا يُدْرِكُكُمْ وَهْمُ الْوَاهِمِينَ

ALṬUF BĪ LUṬFAL-LĀ YUDRIKUM WAHMU-L-WĀHIMĪN

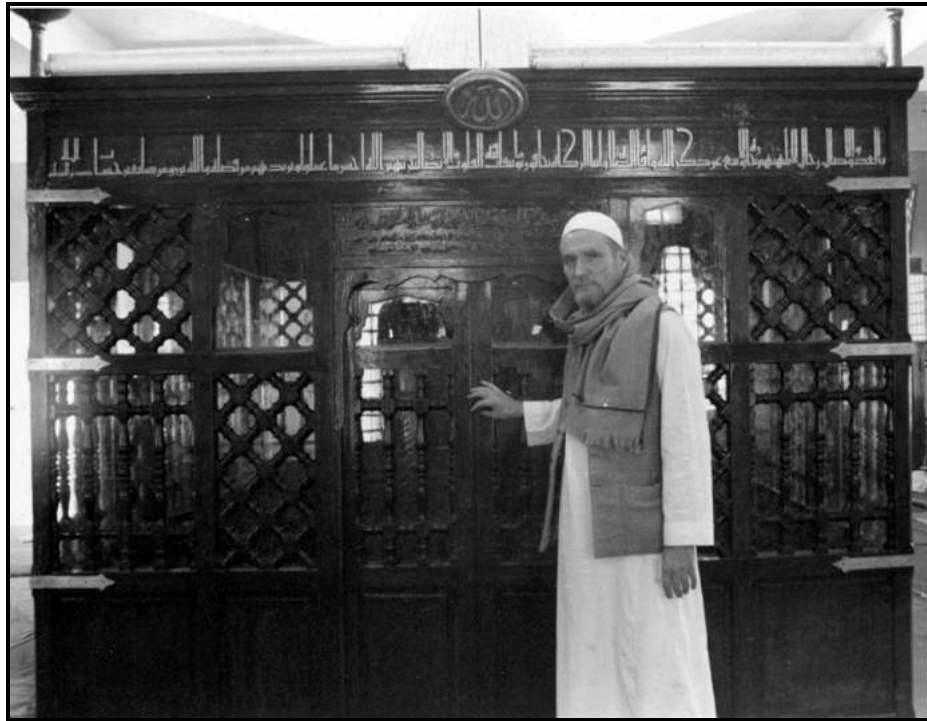
Be tender with me  
with a gentleness which can not be grasped by the illusions of the purveyors of illusion.



إِلَهِي وَجَدْتُكَ رَحِيمًا حَيْثُ لَا أَرْجُوكَ  
فَكَيْفَ لَا أَجِدُكَ نَاصِرًا وَ أَنَا أَرْجُوكَ مَنْ لِي إِذَا قَطَعْتَنِي؟  
وَمَنْ لِي إِذَا لَمْ تَرْحَمْنِي؟  
فَصَلِّنِي مِنْ حَيْثُ تَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ  
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

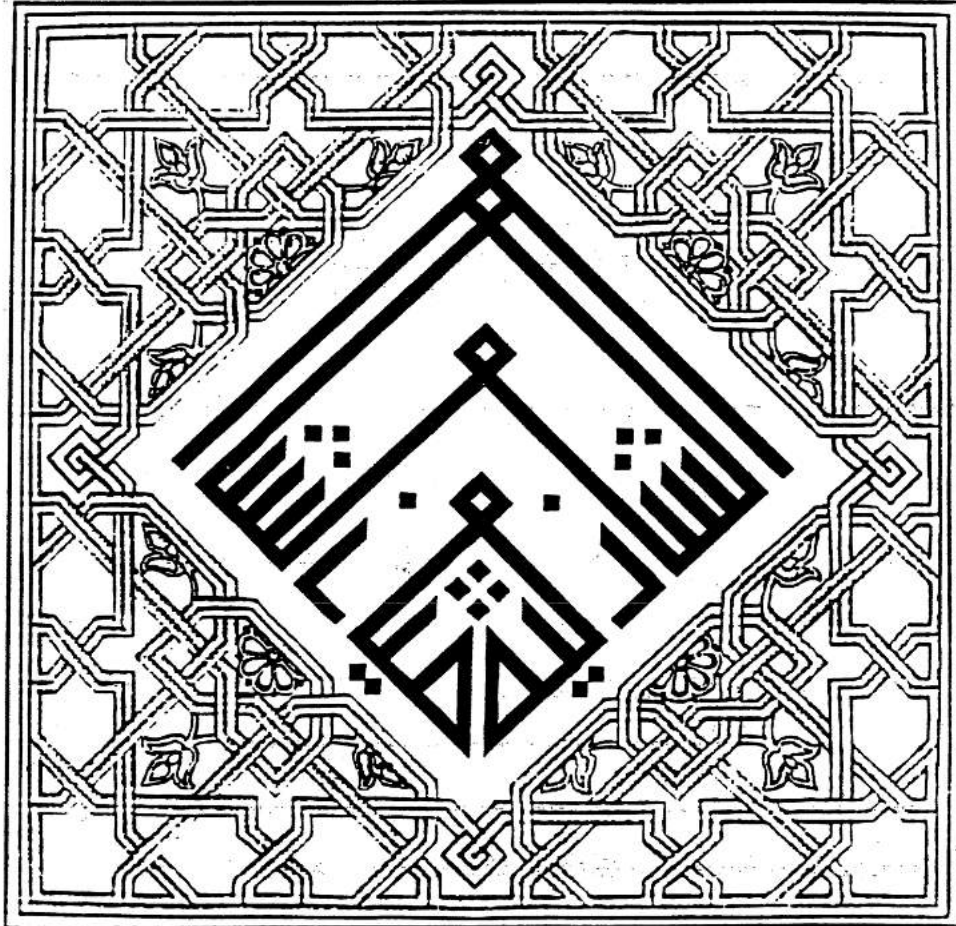
ʔILĀHĪ WAJADĀTUKA RAHĪMAN ḤAYṬHU LĀ 'ARJŪK  
FA-KAYFA LĀ 'AJIDUKA NĀŞIRANW-WA 'ANA ARJŪKA MAN LĪ 'IDĤĀ QATA'TANĪ?  
WA MAN LĪ 'IDĤĀ LAM TARḤAMNĪ?  
FAṢILNĪ MIN ḤAYṬHU TA'LAMU WA LĀ 'A'LAMU  
INNAKA 'ALĀ KULLI ŞĤAY'IN QADĪR  
WA ŞALLA-LLĀHU 'ALA SAYYĪDINĀ MUḤAMMADIN WA 'ALA ĀĀLIHI WA ŞAḤBIHI  
WA SALLAM TASLIMAN

Oh my Allāh, I have found You Mercy Full where I did not hope.  
How then will I not find Your support when I hope in You not to sunder my relations {with You}?  
And who do I have if You are not merciful to me?  
Connect me to the place where You Know and I do not know, for  
*Truly You have power over all things*<sup>6</sup>  
And Benediction s' of Allāh be upon our liege-lord Muḥammad and his family and companions  
— Peace in abundance —



*Shaykh Nooruddeen Durkee at the door of the Maqam of Shaykh 'Abū-l-Ḥasan*

# سَفِينَةُ الْجَمَالِ



للعارف بالله الشيخ أبو العباس أحمد بن عيسى البرنسي  
يسمى أيضا « أحمد الزروق » قدس الله سره

## The Ship of Safety

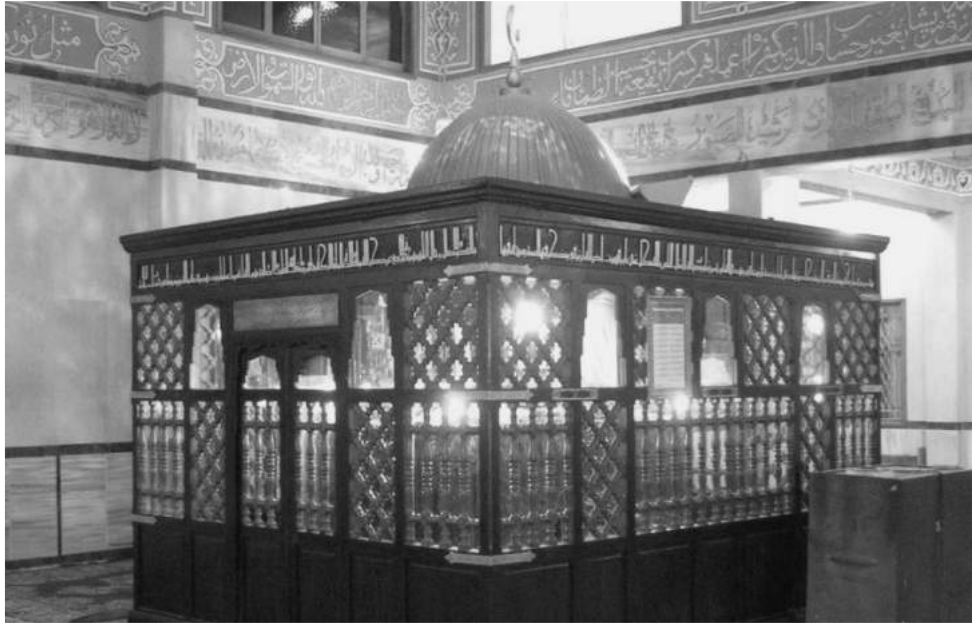
by

The Knower by Allāh, Shāykh ʿAbū-l-ʿAbbās ʿAḥmad bin ʿIssa al-Burnusī  
popularly known as Shāykh Aḥmad az-Zarrūq

( May Allāh sanctify his Secret )

prefaced by a short qasidah of unknown provenance





*Maqam of Sīdī Abū-l-Ḥasan asḥ-Shādhḍhulī, Humaythīra*

◦ The Ship of Safety ◦

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

ʿAʿUDḥU BI-LLĀHI MINA-Sh-ShAYṬĀNI-R-RAJĪM

I take refuge with Allāh from the accursed shayṭān

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*



بَدَأْتُ بِبِسْمِ اللَّهِ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ

BADAʿTU BI-BISMI-L-LĀHI JALLA JALĀLUH

I begin with the Name of Allāh, great be His Majesty



طَلَبْتُ مِنَ الْوَهَّابِ حُسْنَ الْإِعَانَةِ

ṬALABTU MINA-L-WAHHĀBI ḤUSNĀ-L-ʾIʿĀNATI

I petition the Giver's Beneficent Solicitude.

فَسُبْحَانَ مَنْ يَهْدِي الْأَنَامَ بِفَضْلِهِ

FA-SUBḤĀNA MAN YAHDĪ-L-ʾANĀMA BI-FADLIH

So glory be to Him Who guides humanity by His Graciousness



وَيَفْتَحُ أَبْوَابَ الرِّجَا لِلْبَرِيَّةِ

WA YAFTAḤU ʾAbāWABA-R-RAJA LI-L-BARIYYATI

and Who opens the doors of hope to the creation.

وَ يُنْعِمُ بِالْإِفْضَالِ وَ الْجُودِ دَائِمًا

WA YUN‘IMU BI-L-’IFDĀLI WA-L-JUDI DĀ’IMĀ

and Who always bestows favours graciously and generously



لِمُغْتَرِفٍ مِنْ بَحْرِ عِلْمِ الْحَقِيقَةِ

LI-MUGĥTARIFIM-MIM-BAĥRI ‘ILMI-L-ĥAQĪQATI

to those who ladle out knowledge from the Sea of Reality.

وَ لَيْسَ يَغُوصُ الْبَحْرَ مَنْ كَانَ جَاهِلًا

WA LAYSA YAGĥŪṢU-L-BAĥRA MAN KĀNA JĀHILĀ

And those who are ignorant cannot dip into this Sea



وَ لَكِنْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ فَارْكَبْ سَفِينَةَ

WA LĀKIN BI-FADLI-LLĀHI FARKAB SAFĪNATI

but by the Graciousness of Allāh they can ride the Ship.

سَفِينَتِي تَقْوَى اللَّهِ تَسْعَى إِلَى الْهُدَى

SAFINATĪ TAQĀWĀ-LLĀHI TAS‘Ā ‘ILĀ-L-HUDĀ

My Ship of godliness that sails to Guidance



وَ تَجْرِي بِتَحْقِيقِ بَحْرِ الشَّرِيعَةِ

WA TAJĤJRI BI-TAĥQĪQI BAĥRI-Sh-ShĤARI‘ATI

and sails by realization of the Sea of the Revealed Law.

◦ The Ship of Safety ◦

مَجَادِيفُهَا دَفَعُ الْمَصَائِبِ وَالْبَلَاءِ

MAJĀDĪFUHĀ DAFACU-L-MAṢĀ'IBI-L-BALĀ

Its oars fend off catastrophes and calamity



وَرَأَيْسُهَا يَسْعَى لِنَحْوِ السَّلَامَةِ

WA RA'ĪSUHĀ YAS'Ā LI-NAḤWI-S-SALĀMATI

and its captain wends the way toward Peace.

فَإِنِّي هَجَرْتُ الْخَلْقَ طَرًّا بِأَسْرِهَا

FA'INNĪ HAJARTU-L-KḤALQA ṬURRĀM-BI-'ASRIHĀ

So I left the creation entirely behind



لَعَلِّي أَرَىٰ مَحْبُوبَ قَلْبِي بِمُقْلَتِي

LA'ALLĪ 'ARĀ MAḤBŪBA QALBĪ BI-MUQĀLATĪ

in the hope I might see the Beloved of my heart with my eyes.

وَ خَالَفْتُ أَصْحَابِي وَأَهْلِي وَ جِيرَتِي

WA KḤALAF TU 'AṢḤABĪ WA 'AHLĪ WA JĪRATĪ

And put behind me my friends and my family and my neighbours



وَ يَتَمَتُّ نَجْلِي وَ اعْتَزَلْتُ عَشِيرَتِي

WA YATAMTU NAJĀLĪ WA-'TAZALTU 'ASHĪRATĪ

and orphaned my children and isolated myself from my people.



وَوَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَا

WA WAJJAHTU WAJāHĪ LI-LADhĪ FATARA-S-SAMĀ

And I turned my face to the One Who created the heavens



وَأَعْرَضْتُ عَنْ أَفْلَاكِهَا الْمُسْتَنِيرَةِ

WAʾAʿRADTU ʿAN ʾAFALĀKIHĀ-L-MUSTANIRATI

and ignored the movements of its bright celestial bodies.

وَعَلَّقْتُ قَلْبِي بِالْمَعَالِي تَهَمُّمَا

WA‘ALLAOǎTU QALBĪ BI-L-MA‘ĀLĪ TAHAMMUMĀ

And I attached my heart to the high aim of resolute zeal



وَكُوشِفْتُ بِالْتَّحْقِيقِ مَنْ غَيْرَ مَرَاةٍ

WA KŪSHIFTU BI-T-TAHQĪQI MIN GHAYRI MIRʾATI

and then I saw by direct realization without dissimulation.

وَ طَرَحْتُ طَرْفِي بِالْمَعَالِي تَنْزُهًا

WA TARAHTU TARAFĪ BI-L-MA‘ĀLĪ TANAZZUHĀ

And cast my eyes on the high spotless purity



وَاخْضَتْ بِحَارِ الْحَبِّ فِي كُلِّ رَتْبَةٍ

WA KHUDTU BAHĀRA-L-HUBBI FĪ KULLI RUTĀBATI

and at every stage I dove into the Seas of Love.

وَقُلِّدْتُ سَيْفَ الْعِزِّ فِي مَجْمَعِ الْوَغَا

WA QULITTU SAYFA-L-‘IZZI FĪ MAJĀMA‘I-L-WAGĥĀ

And I girt on the sword of nobility in the throng of tumultuous battle



وَصِرْتُ إِمَامَ الْوَقْتِ فِي كُلِّ رَفْعَةٍ

WA ṢIRTU ‘IMĀMA-L-WAQĥTI FĪ KULLI RAF‘ATI

and became a leader of the time at every level.

وَمَلَكَتُ أَرْضَ الْغَرْبِ طُرًّا بِأَسْرِهَا

WA MLAKTU ‘ARḐA-L-GĥARBI BI-‘ASRIHĀ

And I possessed all the lands of the West



وَكُلُّ بِلَادِ الشَّرْقِ فِي طَيِّ قَبْضَتِي

WA KULLU BILADI-Sĥ-SĥARQI FĪ ṬAYYI QABĥDATĪ

and all the countries of East in my closed fist.

فَمَلَكَنِيهَا بَعْضُ مَنْ كَانَ عَارِفًا

FA-MALLAKANĪHĀ BA‘ḐU MAN KĀNA ‘ĀRIFĀ

And those who know gave me the rights of possession



وَخَلَّفَنِي فِيهَا بِأَحْسَنِ سِيرَةٍ

WA KĥALLAFANĪ FĪHĀ BI-‘AĥSANI SĪRATI

and made me heir to the most excellent way of life.

فَارْفَعُ قَدْرًا ثُمَّ أَخْفِضْ مَنْصِبًا

FA-R-FA'U QADĀRĀN THUMMA 'AKhFIDU MANṢIBĀ

Thus do I raise and then do I lower the ranks [of people]



بِأَرْفَعِ مِقْدَارٍ وَأَرْفَعِ هِمَّةً

BI-'ARFA'I MIQĀDĀRIN-WA 'ARFA'I HIMMATI

with the least effort and the least concern.

وَأَعِزُّ قَوْمًا ثُمَّ أُولِي سِوَاهُمْ

WA 'A'ZILU QŌWMAN THUMMA 'UWALLIYI SIWĀHUM

I remove people from their positions and appoint others



وَأُعَلِّي مَقَامَ الْبَعْضِ فَوْقَ الْمَنْصِبَةِ

WA 'U'LĪ MAQĀMA-L-BA'DI FŌWQA-L-MINAṢṢBATI

and raise the station of some to a high post.

وَأَبْسِطْ أَرْوَاحًا وَأَقْبِضْ أَنْفُسًا

WA 'ABĀSIT 'ARWĀHĀN-WA 'AQĀBID 'ANFUSĀ

And I release souls and capture spirits



وَأُحْيِ قُلُوبًا بَعْدَ مَوْتِ الْقَطِيعَةِ

WA 'UHYĪ QULUBAM BA'DA MŌWTI-L-QATĪ'ATI

and revive the hearts after the death of [their] breaking.

وَ أَجْبُرْ مَكْسُورًا وَ أَشْهَرْ خَامِلًا

WA-Jā-BUR MAKSŪRĀÑW-WA-Sh-HURU KhĀMILĀ

I mend the broken [ones] and activate the lazy



وَ أَرْفَعُ مَوْضُوعًا بِأَرْفَعِ عِمَّتِي

WA-R-FA'U MŌWDŪ'AM BI-ARFA'I 'IMMATĪ

and raise up the lowly by lifting my turban.

وَ أَقْهَرُ جَبَّارًا وَ أَذْخَضُ ظَالِمًا

WA-Qā-HARU JABBĀRĀÑW-WA-ADhHĀDU ḌĥĀLIMĀ

I conquer the proud and defeat the tyrant



وَ أَنصُرُ مَظْلُومًا بِسُلْطَانِ سَطَوَتِي

WA-N-ṢURU MADhLŪMAM BI-SULTĀNI SAṬĀWATĪ

and I am victorious [over] injustice by the power of my attack.

وَ أُلْهِمْتُ أَسْرَارًا وَ أُعْطِيتُ حِكْمَةً

WA 'ULHIMTU 'ASRĀRĀÑW-WA 'U'ṬĪTU ḤIKMATA

I was inspired [by] the secrets and was given wisdom



وَ حُزْتُ مَقَامَاتِ الْعُلَا الْمُسْتَنِيرَةِ

WA ḤUZZTU MAQĀMĀTI-L-'ULĀ-L-MUSTANĪRATI

and won the highest degrees of enlightenment.



أَنَا لِمُرِيدِي جَامِعٌ لِشَتَاتَةِ

ʾANĀ LI-MURĪDĪ JĀMIʿUL-LI-SHĀTĀTITI

I am, for my students, the gatherer of broken pieces



إِذَا مَاسَطَىٰ جَوْرُ الزَّمَانِ بِسَطَوَتِي

ʾIDĥĀ MĀSAṬAYĀ JŌWRU-Z-ZAMĀNI BI-SAṬĀWATĪ

[and] if they are attacked by the injustice of time I have the power [to aid them].

فَإِنْ كُنْتَ فِي كَرْبٍ وَ ضَيْقٍ وَ شِدَّةٍ

FAʾIN KUNTA FĪ KARBI WA ḌIḤINW-WA SHĪDDAH

So if you are overburdened and in tight and hard {times}



فَنَادِ أَيَا زَرُوقُ آتِي بِسُرْعَةٍ

FA-NĀDI ʾAYĀ ZARŪQU ĀĀTĪ BI-SURʿATI

then call, “Oh Zarrūq!” — I will come swiftly.

فَكَمْ كُرْبَةٍ تُجْلَىٰ إِذَا ذَكَرَ اسْمُنَا

FA-KAM KURBATĪN TUJĀLAYA ʾIDĥĀ DHUKIRA-S-MUNĀ

For many troubles are resolved by mentioning our name



وَ كَمْ كُرْبَةٍ تُجْلَىٰ بِإِفْرَادٍ صُحْبَتِي

WA KAM KURBATĪN TUJĀLAYA BI-ʾIFRĀDI ṢUḤBATĪ

and many troubles are resolved for the individual [who seeks] my company.

◦ The Ship of Safety ◦

فَحَقِّقْ رَجَانَا بِالْحَبِيبِ مُحَمَّدٍ

FA-ḤAQQIQĀ RAJĀNĀ BI-L-ḤABĪBI MUḤAMMADĀ

So realise our hopes by the Beloved Muḥammad



أَمَامَ الْوَرَى شَمْسُ الْوُجُودِ الْمُضِيَّةِ

ʾIMĀMU-L-WARAYĀ SHĀMSU-L-WŪJŪDI-L-MUḌʾPATI

The Leader of the mortals — the bright sun of existence.

عَلَيْهِ صَلَاةُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ سَلَامُهُ

ʿALAYHI ṢALĀTU-LLĀHI THUMMA SALĀMUH

Benedictions of Allāh upon him — then — peace



مَا يَرْجُو بِهِ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ كَشَفًا لَشِدَّةٍ

MA YARJŪ BIHI KULLU-M-RIYʾIN KASHʾFAL-LI-SHIDDATI

he it is that everyone goes to for intercession in hard times.

كَذَا الْخُلَفَاءُ الرَّاشِدُونَ وَآلِهِمْ

KADĀ-L-KḤULAFĀʾU-R-RĀSHĪDŪNA WA ĀĀLIHUM

and so to for the Rightful Successors and their families



أُولُو الْفَضْلِ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَكُلُّ الصَّحَابَةِ

ʾŪWLŪ-L-FADLI WA-T-TAQĀWĀ WA KULLU-Ṣ-ṢAḤĀBATI

Those possessed of graciousness and godliness and all of the Companions.

يَا خَالِقِي يَا رَازِقِي • يَا ثِقَتِي يَا أَمَلِي

YĀ KhĀLIQĪ — YĀ RĀZIQĪ ≈ YĀ ThĪQATĪ — YĀ ʿAMALĪ

Oh my Creator — Oh my Provider ≈ Oh my Trust — Oh my Hope



أَنْتَ رَجَائِي وَ مَقْصِدِي • أَنْتَ حَقُّ الْمَوْتِلِ

ʿANTA RAJĀʾIY WA MAQṢIDĪ ≈ ʿANTA ḤAQQU-L-MŌWʾILĪ

You are my Longing and my Goal ≈ You are my Truth and my Refuge

أَنْتَ الْمُجِيبُ لِمَنْ دَعَى

ʿANTA-L-MUJĪBU LI-MAN DAʿAY

You are the Answerer of the one who calls.



أَنْتَ الْمُجِيبُ الْأَزَلِي

ʿANTA-L-MUJĪBU-L-ʾAZALĪ

You are the Answerer from before time was time.

إِخْتِمَ بِخَيْرِ عَمَلِي عِنْدَ حُلُولِ الْأَجَلِ

ʾIKhTIM BI-KhAYRI ʿAMALĪ ʿINDA ḤULŪLI-L-ʾAJALI

I seal this work with the best thing for the arrival of the time of my death:



بِحَقِّ طَهَ الْمُصْطَفَى وَ سُورَةِ الْمَزْمَلِ

BI-ḤAQQI ṬĀĀ HĀĀ-L-MUṢṬAFĀ WA SŪRATU-L-MUZZAMMIL

by the Truth of ṬA HA — The Chosen — and the Chapter 'The Enwrap'

{Q 73}

• The Ship of Safety •

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*



وَالَهُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

WA'ILĀHUKUM 'ILĀHUN WĀḤIDUL-  
LĀĀ 'ILĀHA 'ILLĀ HUWA-R-RAḤMĀNU-R-RAḤĪM

*Your Allāh is One Deity — there is no deity save He — The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*  
{2:163}



اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ۚ

ALLĀHU LĀĀ 'ILĀHA ILLĀ HUW • AL-ḤAYYU-L-QAYYŪM

*Allāh! — no deity except Him • The Ever Living, The Eternally Present*  
{2:255p}



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْم • اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

ALIF LĀĀĀM-MĪĪM

ALLĀHU -LĀĀ 'ILĀHA 'ILLĀ HUWA-L-ḤAYYU-L-QAYYŪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*

ALIF LĀĀĀM-MĪĪM

*Allāh, there is no deity save He — The Ever Living, The Eternally Existant*  
{3:1-2}

وَعَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ

WA'ANATI-L-WUJŪHU LI-L-ḤAYYI-L-QAYYŪM:

*And faces shall humble themselves before the Ever Living, The Eternally Existant*  
{20:111}





اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

ALLĀHU LĀĀ ʾILĀHA ILLĀ HUW • AL-ĤAYYU-L-QAYYŪM

*Allāh! — no deity except Him • The Ever Living, The Eternally Present*

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

LĀ TAʾKĥUDĥUHU SINATUŃW-WA LĀ NAWM

*He is taken neither by slumber nor sleep*

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

LAĤU MĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA MĀ FĪ-L-ARD

*To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth*

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

MAN DĥĀ-L-LADĥĪ YASHĥFAʿU ʿINDAHŪ ʾILLĀ BPIDĥNIH

*Who is there to intercede with Him save by His permission*

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ

YAʿLAMU MĀ BAYNA ʾAYDĪHIM WA MĀ KĥALFAHUM

*He knows what is betwixt their hands and behind their backs*

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

WA LĀ YUĥĪṬŪNA BI-ShĥAYʾIM-MIN ʿILMIHI ʾILLĀ BIMĀ ShĥĀĀʾ

*and they encompass no thing from His Knowledge except what He wills*

◦ The Ship of Safety ◦

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

WASİʿA KURSIYYUHU-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-ʿARD

*His Foundation is wider than the heavens and the earth*

وَلَا يَؤُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا

WA LĀ YAʾUDUHU ḤIFḌUHUMĀ

*And He is not tired by their preservation.*

وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

WA HUWA-L-ʿALIYYU-L-ʿADHĪM

*And He is The All High, The Sublime*  
{2:255}



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

حَمْدٌ

• تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

ḤĀ MĪĪM

TANZĪLU-L-KITĀBI MĪNA-LLĀHI-L-ʿAZĪZI-L-ʿALĪM

GhĀFIRI-Dh-DhĀNBI WA QĀBILI-L-TŌWBĪ SHĀDĪDI-L-ʿIQĀBI DhĪ-Ṭ-TŌWL

LĀĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLĀ HUWA ʾILAYHI-L-MAṢĪR

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*

*Ha Mūim*

*The Revelation of the Book is from Allāh, The Mighty, The Knower.*

*Forgiver of Sin, Acceptor of Repentance, Severe in Punishment, Limitless in His Bounty.*

*There is no deity other than He and unto Him is the journeying.*

{40:1-3}



لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ

LI-LLĀHI MĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA MĀ FĪ-L-ʿARD

*Unto {Allāh} belongs what is in the heavens and in the earth*

وَ اِنْ تُبَدُوْا مَا فِىْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تَخْفَوْهُ يَحٰسِبْكُمْ بِهٖ اللّٰهُ

WA ʾIN TUBTŪ MĀ FĪ ʾANFUSIKUM ʾŌW TUKhFUHU YUḥĀSIBĀKUM BIHI-LLĀH

*and whether you make known what is in your minds orhide it — Allāh will call-you to account*

فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

FA-YAGhFIRU LIMAʾNY-YASHĥĀĀʾU WA YUʿADhDhIBU MAʾNY-YASHĥĀĀʾU

WA-LLĀHU ʿALĀ KULLI ShĥAYIN QADĪR

*He will forgive whom He will and He will punish whom He will  
and Allāh has power over all things*

ءَاَمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ

ʾĀMANA-R-RASŪLU BIMĀĀ ʾUNZILA ʾILAYHI MIR-R-RABBIHI WA-L-MUʾMINŪN

*The Messenger believes in that which was sent down upon him from his Lord, and the believers:*

كُلٌّ ءَاَمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ مَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَ كُتُبِهٖ وَ رُسُلِهٖ

KULLUN ʾĀMAṆA BI-LLĀHI WA MALĀĀʾIKATIHI WA KUTUBIHI WA RUSULIH

*they each believe in Allāh, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers,*

لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ

LĀ NUFARRIQU BAYNA ʾAḥADIM-MIR-RUSULIH

— *we make no discrimination between any one of His Messengers* —

◦ The Ship of Safety ◦

وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا

WA QĀLŪ SAMIʿNĀ WA ʾAṬAʿNĀ

*and they say, "We hear and we obey."*

غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

GHUFRĀNAKA RABBANĀ WA ʾILAYKA-L-MAṢĪR

*{We beseech} Your Forgiveness, Oh Lord, and to You is the homecoming."*

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

LĀ YUKALLIFU-LLĀHU NAFSAN ʾILLĀ WUSʿAHĀ

*Allāh burdens no soul except to its capacity*

لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

LAHĀ MĀ KASABAT WA ʿALAYHĀ MĀ-K-TASABAT

*to it — what it earned — and upon it — what it deserved.*

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا

RABBANĀ LĀ TUʾĀKHIDhNĀĀ ʾIN-N-NASĪNĀĀ ʾŌW ʾAKhṬĀʾNĀ

*Our Lord, do not censure us in our omissions or our commissions of error.*رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا  
كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَاRABBANĀ WA LĀ TAḤMIL ʿALAYNĀĀ ʾIṢRAN  
KAMĀ ḤAMALTAHU ʿALĀ-L-LADhĪNA MIN QABĀLINĀ*Our Lord, do not lay a load on us  
like the load you laid on those who came before us.*



رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ

RABBANĀ WA LĀ TUḤAMMILNĀ MĀ LĀ TĀQATA LANĀ BIH

*Our Lord, do not lay a load on us that we are not capable of bearing,*

وَأَعْفُ عَنَّا وَآغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا

WA-ʿ-FU ʿANNĀ WA-Gḥ-FIR LANĀ WA-R-ḤAMNĀĀ

*and pardon us and forgive us and have mercy on us.*

أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

ʾANTA MŌWLĀNĀ FA-N-ṢURNĀ ʿALA-L-QŌWMI-L-KĀFIRĪN

*You are our Protector! Aid us against the disbelievers.*

{2:284-286}



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ • لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

QUL YĀĀĀʾAYYUHĀ-L-KĀFIRŪN • LĀĀ ʾAʿBUDU MĀ TAʿBUDŪN

*Say: Oh you who cover{up the Truth} • I do not worship what you worship •*

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ • وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ

WA LĀĀ ʾANTUM ʿĀBIDŪNA MĀĀ ʾAʿBUDā • WA LĀĀ ʾANA ʿĀBIDUM-MA ʿABATTUM

*Nor do you worship what I worship • and I will not worship what you worship*

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ • لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

WA LĀĀ ʾANTUM ʿĀBIDŪNA MĀĀ ʾADUDā • LAKUM DĪNUKUM WA LIYA DĪN

*Nor will you worship what I worship • To you your religion and to me my religion.*

{109:1-6}

◦ The Ship of Safety ◦

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

ʾIDĥĀ JĀĀʾA NAṢRU-LLĀHI WA-L-FATH

*When The Victory of Allāh comes and the Opening*

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا .

WA RAʾAYTA-N-NĀSA YADĥULŪNA FĪ DĪNI-LLĀHI ʾAFWĀJĀ .

*and you see throngs of people entering into the Religion of Allāh*

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ۝

FASABBIḤ BI-ḤAMDĪ RABBIKA WA-S-TAGĥFIR • ʾINNAHŪ KĀNA TŌWWĀBĀ

*Then hymn the praises of your Lord and seek forgiveness. Truly He is ever ready to turn {to you}*  
{110:1-3}*read the following three sūrahs three times each*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, the Bestower of Mercy.*

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ . اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ .

QUL HUWA-LLĀHU ʾAḤADĥ • ALLĀHU-Ṣ-ṢAMADĥ •

*Say He — Allāh — is One — Allāh — The Eternally Self-Existant.*

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ . وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ .

ḤLAM YALIDĥ WA LAM YŪLADĥ WA LAM YAKUL-LAHŪ KUFUWĀN ʾAḤADĥ

*Neither begetting nor begotten and no one is equal to Him*

{112:1-4}



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAĥMĀNI-R-RAĥĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Bestower of Mercy*

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

QUL ʿAʿŪDĥU BI-RABBI-L-FALAQā •

*Say! I take refuge in the Lord of the Crack of Dawn*

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ • وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ

MIN-ShARRI MĀ KhĀLAQā • WA MIN-ShARRI GhĀSIQIN ʾIDĥĀ WAQABā

*from the evil within His Creation • and from the evil of the darkness of night when it gathers*

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ • وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

WA MIN-ShARRI-N-NAFFĀThĀTI FĪ-L-ʿUQADā

WA MINShARRI ḤĀSIDIN ʾIDĥĀ ḤASADā

*and from the evil of those who blow on knots and the evil of enviers when they envy*

{ 113:1-5 }



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAĥMĀNI-R-RAĥĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Bestower of Mercy*

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ • مَلِكِ النَّاسِ • إِلَهِ النَّاسِ

QUL ʿAʿŪDĥU BI-RABBI-N-NĀS • MALIKI-N-NĀS • ʾILĀHI-N-NĀS

*Say! I take refuge in the Lord of the people, the Ruler of the people, the God of the people*

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ • الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ

MIN-ShARRI-L-WASWĀSI-L-KĥANNĀS • ALLADĥĪ YUWASWISU FĪ ṢUDŪRI-N-NĀS

*From the evil of the sneaking whisperer that whispers in the breasts of people*

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

MINA-L-JINNĀTI WĀ-N-NĀS

*from the jinn and the people*

{ 114:1-6 }

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ اَنْ اَشْرِكَ بِكَ وَاَنَا اَعْلَمُ  
وَاَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لَا اَعْلَمُ

ALLAHUMMA ʾINNĪ ʾAʿŪDĥU BIKA ʾAN ʾASHĥRIKA WA ʾANA ʾAʿLAMU  
WA ʾASTAGĥFIRUKA LIMĀ LĀ ʾAʿLAMU

Oh Allāh, Truly I seek refuge with You from knowingly associating partners with You  
and I seek Your forgiveness for what {I did} unknowingly.

{3x}

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اَلْهَمِّ وَاَلْحَزَنِ  
وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اَلْعَجْزِ وَاَلْكَسَلِ  
وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اَلْبُخْلِ وَاَلْجُبْنِ  
وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَلْبَةِ الدِّينِ وَقَهْرِ الرِّجَالِ

ALLAHUMMA ʾINNĪ ʾAʿŪDĥU BIKA MINA-L-HAMMI WA-L-ĤAZANI  
WA ʾAʿŪDĥU BIKA MINA-L-ʿAJĥZI WA-L-KASALI  
WA ʾAʿŪDĥU BIKA MINA-L-BUKĥLI WA-L-JUBĥNI  
WA ʾAʿŪDĥU BIKA MINA GĥALABATI-D-DĒNI WA QAHRI-R-RAJĀL

Oh Allāh, Truly I seek refuge with You from grief and sorrow.  
I seek refuge with You from weakness and sloth.  
I seek refuge with you from avarice and cowardice  
and I seek refuge with You from the burden of debt and from servitude from men.

{3x}

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ اَلْكُفْرِ وَاَلْفَقْرِ  
وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ  
لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ

ALLAHUMMA ʾINNĪ ʾAʿŪDĥU BIKA MINA-L-KUFRI WA-L-FAQĥRI  
WA ʾAʿŪDĥU BIKA MINA ʿADĥĀBI-L-QABĥRI  
LĀĀ ʾILĀHA ʾILLA ʾANTA

Oh Allāh, Truly I seek refuge with You from disbelief and poverty  
I seek refuge with You from the torment of the grave  
There is no deity except You..

{3x}



اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ بَدَنِيْ ، اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ سَمْعِيْ  
اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ بَصَرِيْ  
لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ

ALLAHUMMA ‘ĀFINĪ FĪ BADANĪ: ALLAHUMMA ‘ĀFINĪ FĪ SAM‘Ī:  
ALLAHUMMA ‘ĀFINĪ FĪ BAṢARĪ:  
LĀĀ ‘ILĀHA ‘ILLA ‘ANTA

Oh Allāh restore health to my body — Oh Allāh restore health to my hearing  
Oh Allāh restore health to my seeing.  
There is no deity except You.  
{3x}

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ رَبِّيْ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ  
خَلَقْتَنِيْ وَاَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَاَنَا عَلٰى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اَسْتَطَعْتُ  
اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ  
اَبُوْءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَاَبُوْءُ بِذَنْبِيْ  
فَاغْفِرْ لِيْ فَاِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ

ALLAHUMMA ‘ANTA RABBI LĀĀ ‘ILĀHA ‘ILLA ‘ANTA  
KhĀLAQāTANĪ WA‘ANA ‘ABĀDUKA WA‘ANA ‘ALĀ ‘AHDIKA  
WA WA‘DIKA MĀ-S-TAṬA‘TU  
‘A‘ŪDhU BIKā MIN ShARRI MĀ ṢANA‘TU  
‘ABŪ‘U LAKā BI-NI‘MATIKA ‘ALLAYā WA‘ABŪ‘U BI-DhAMBĪ  
FA-Gh-FIR LĪ FA-‘INNAH LĀ YARGhFIRU-Dh-DhUNŪBā

Oh Allāh, You are my Sustainer — No deity except you.  
You created me and I am Your worshipful slave and I will keep Your Covenant and Promise  
according to my ability.  
I seek refuge with You from whatever evil I have wrought.  
I return to You with the Blessings that You have bestowed upon me  
and I return to You laden with my faults  
So forgive me for none forgives sins but You.  
{3x}

In the next two supplications  
please use the appropriate phrase conditional on the time of reading.  
i.e., morning or evening

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَصْبَحْتُ مِنْكَ فِى نِعْمَةٍ وَ عَافِيَةٍ وَ سِتْرٍ  
اَمْسَيْتُ

فَاَتَمِّمْ نِعْمَتَكَ عَلَيَّ وَ عَافِيَّتَكَ وَ سِتْرَكَ  
فِى الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ

ALLĀHUMMA ʾINNĪ ʾAṢBAḤTU  
ʾAMSĪTU MINKA FĪ NAʿMATIN WA ĀFITATI WA SATR  
FA-ʾATMIM NIʿMATAKA ʿALAYYA WA ʿĀFIYYATIKA WA SITRAKA  
FI-D-DUNYĀ WA-L-ʾĀKHIRAH

Oh Allāh truly I have awoken blessed and restored and veiled {from the eyes of others}  
I have entered evening  
So complete Your Blessings, Your Resoration and Your Veiling  
in this world and the final world  
{3x}

اَللّٰهُمَّ مَا اَصْبَحَ بِيْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ اَوْ بِاَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ  
اَمْسَى بِيْ  
فَمِنْكَ وَحْدَكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ فَلكَ الْحَمْدُ وَ لَكَ الشُّكْرُ

ALLĀHUMMA MĀ ʾAṢBAḤU BĪ  
ʾAMSĪ BĪ MIN NAʿMATIN ʾŌW BI-ʾAḤDIM-MIN KhALQIK  
FA-MINKA WAḤDAKA LĀ ShARĪKA LAKA FALAKA-L-ḤAMDU WA LAKA-Sh-ShUKR

Oh Allāh that which entered the morning with me by way of blessings or by one of Your creatures  
that with entered the evening with me  
is from You alone— without partner— praise be to You and thanks be to You.  
{3x}

يَا رَبِّىْ  
لَكَ الْحَمْدُ كَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لِجَلَالِ وَجْهِكَ وَ عَظِيْمِ سُلْطَانِكَ

YĀ RABBĪ  
LAKA-L-ḤAMDU KAMĀ YAMBAGHĪ LI-JALALI WAJĀḤIKA WA ʿADḤĪMI SULṬĀNIK

Oh my Sustainer;  
Praise be to You in a manner befitting Your Countenance and the immensity of Your Power.  
{3x}

رَضِيتُ بِاللّٰهِ رَبًّا وَ بِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَ بِسَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ نَبِيًّا وَ رَسُولًا

RADĪTU BI-LLĀH RABBĀ WA BI-L-ʾISLĀMI DĪNNĀN-WA BI-SAYYIDINĀ MUḤAMMADĀ ṢALLA-  
LLĀHU ʿALAYHI WA SALLAMA NABĪNĀ WA RASŪLĀ

I am content with Allāh and my Lord and with ʾIslām as my religion;  
and with our liege-lord Muḥammad, blessings of Allāh and peace be upon him,  
our Prophet and Messenger.

{3x}

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَ بِحَمْدِهِ عَدَدَ خَلْقِهِ وَ رِضَا نَفْسِهِ  
وَ زِنَةَ عَرْشِهِ وَ مَدَادَ كَلِمَاتِهِ

SUBĤĀNA-LLĀHI WA BI-ḤAMDIHI WA ʿADADA KhALQIHIWA RIḌĀ NAFSIHI  
WA ZINATA ʿARShIHI WA MADĀDA KALIMĀTIHI

Glory to Allāh with His Praise to the number of His Creatures to the degree that pleases Him  
and to the extent of His Throne and with the amount of ink {it takes to write} His Words

{3x}

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

ʾAʿŪDhU BI-KALIMĀTI-LLĀHI-T-TĀMMĀTI MIN ShARRI MĀ KhĀLAQĀ

I seek refuge with Allāh to the entirety of the evil that He created.

{3x}

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَ هُوَ السَّمْعُ الْعَلِيمُ  
BISMĪ-LLĀHI-L-LADhĪ LĀ YĀḌURRU MĀʿA ʾISMĪHI ShAYʾUN  
FĪ-L-ʾARDI WA LĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀʾI WA HUWA-S-SAMIʿU-L-ʿADhĪM

In the Name of Allāh with whose Name no harm shall come to anything  
in the earth or in the heavens and He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing

{3x}

أَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

ʾAʿŪDhU BI-LLĀHI MINA-Sh-ShAYṬĀNI-R-RAJĪM

I seek refuge with Allāh from the stoned Shayṭān.

{3x}

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

*In the Name of Allāh, the Mercy Full, Bestower of Mercy*

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
 عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ  
 هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ  
 الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ  
 سُبْحَنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ  
 هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ  
 لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى  
 يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
 وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

HUWA-LLĀHU-L-LADhĪ LĀĀ 'ILLĀHA 'ILLA HUW •  
 'ĀLIMU-L-GhĀYBI WA-Sh-ShAHĀDAH • HUWA-RAḤMĀNU-R-RAḤĪM  
 HUWA-LLĀHU-L-LADhĪ LĀĀ 'ILLĀHA 'ILLA HUW •  
 AL-MALIKU-L-QUDŪSU-S-SALĀMU-L-MU'MINU-L-MUHAYMINU-L-  
 'AZĪZU-L-JABBĀRU-L-MUTAKABBIR •  
 SUBĥĤĀNA-LLĀHI 'AMMA YUSHRIKŪN •  
 HUWA-LLĀHU-L-KhĀLIQU-L-BĀRI 'U-L-MUṢAWWIR •  
 LAHU-L-'ASMĀ'U-L-HUSNĀ •  
 YUSABBIḤU LAHŪ MĀ FĪ-S-SAMĀWĀTI WA-L-'ARD •  
 WA HUWA-L-'AZĪZU-L-ḤAKĪM •

*He is Allāh save who there is no He •*

*He knows the unseen and the seen • He is the Mercy Full, Bestower of Mercy •*

*He is Allāh save who there is no He •*

*The Sovereign, the Holy, the Peace, the Keeper of Faith, the Protector  
 the Invincible, the Omnipotent, the Most Great •*

*Glorified be Allāh above all they associate {with Him} •*

*He is Allāh — the Creator of All, the Shaper from Nought, the Former of the Image.*

*His are the most beautiful Names.*

*All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him •*

*And He is the Mighty, the Wise •*

{59:22-24}

{1x}



سَبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ سَبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

SUBĤĤĀNA-LLĀHI WA BI-ḤAMDIHI SUBĤĤĀNA-LLĀHI-L-‘ADĤĪM

Glory be to Allāh by His Praise — Glory be to Allāh, the Sublime

{3x}

تَحَصَّنْتُ بِذِي الْعِزَّةِ وَالْجَبَرُوتِ وَاعْتَصَمْتُ بِرَبِّ الْمَلَكُوتِ

وَتَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ

أَصْرَفْ عَنَّا الْأَذَى إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

أَصْرَفْ عَنَّا الْأَذَى إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

أَصْرَفْ عَنَّا الْأَذَى إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

TAḤAṢṢANTU BI-DĤĪ-L-‘IZZATI-L-JABARŪTI WA-‘AṬAṢMTU BI-RABBI-L-MALAKŪT

WA TAWKKALTU ‘ALĀ-L-ḤAYYI-L-LADĤĪ LĀ YAMŪT

‘ISRAF ‘ANNĀ-L-‘ADĤĀ ‘INNAKA ‘ALĀ KULLI SHĤAY‘IN QADĪR

{this phrase is repeated three times in each of the three readings}

I safeguard my self with the Lord of Might and Immensity

and I hold fast to the Lord of the Realm of Dominion

and I rely on the Ever Living who never dies.

Avert all harm from us [for] truly You [have] power over all things.

{this phrase is repeated three times in each of the three readings}

{3x}

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لَا يَلْفِ قُرَيْشٌ ◦ إِيْلَفَهُمْ رَحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ◦

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ ◦

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَءَامَنَهُمْ مِنْ خُوفٍ ◦

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM

LI-‘ILĀFI QURAYSH ◦ ‘ILĀFIHIM RIḤLATA-SĤ-SĤITĀĀ‘I WA-Ṣ-ṢAYF ◦

FA-L-YA‘BUDŪ RABBA ḤĀDĤĀ-L-BAYT ◦

‘ALLADĤĪ ‘ATĤĀ‘AMAHUM MIŤ JŪ‘ITŤ WA-‘ĀMANAHUM MIN KĤŌWF ◦

*In the Name of Allāh, The Mercy Full, The Mercy Bestowing*

*For the protection of Quraysh ◦ {and} their safe passage [in] the journey of winter and summer ◦*

*Thus they should worship the Lord of this House ◦*

*Who has fed them in hunger and secured them from fear ◦*

{104:1-9}

{1x}

اَللّٰهُمَّ كَمَا اَطَعَمْتَهُمْ فَاطْعَمْنَا وَ كَمَا اَمَنْتَهُمْ فَاَمِنَّا  
وَ اجْعَلْنَا لَكَ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِيْنَ

ALLAHUMMA

KAMĀ ṬAṬṬAMTAHUMU FA-ṬAṬṬAMINĀ WA KAMA ĀĀMANTAHUM FA-ĀĀMINNĀ  
WA-JĀ-ʿALNĀ LAKA MINA-SĤ-SĤĀKIRĪN

Oh Allāh — As You fed them so feed us and as You made them safe so make us safe  
and make us to be among the thankful.

{1x}

سَبْحَانَكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ وَ بِحَمْدِكَ  
اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ اَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْكَ

SUBḤANĀKA WA BI-ḤAMDIKA

ṬASHḤADU ṬAL-LĀĀ ṬILĀHA ṬILLĀ ṬĀNTA ṬASTAGḤFIRUKA WA ṬATŪBU ṬILAYK

Glory be to You by Your own Praise  
I bear witness there is no deity except You — I seek Your forgiveness and return to You.

{3x}

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الْعَظِيمَ الَّذِي لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومَ وَ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْهِ

ṬASTAGḤFIRU-LLĀHA-L-ʿADḤĪMA-L-DḤĪ LĀĀ ṬILĀHA ṬILLĀ HUWA-  
L-ḤAYYA-L-QAYYŪM WA ṬATŪBU ṬILAYH

I ask forgiveness from Allāh the Mighty of which there is no other diety save He  
the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting and I return to Him.

{3x}

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
عَبْدِكَ وَ نَبِيِّكَ وَ رَسُولِكَ النَّبِيِّ الْاُمِّيِّ وَ  
عَلَى اٰلِهِ وَ صَحْبِهِ وَ سَلَامٌ

ALLAHUMMA ṢALLI ʿALĀ SAYYIDINĀ MUḤAMMADIN

ʿABĀDIKA WA NABIYYIKA WA RASŪLIKA-N-NABIYYI-L-ʾUMIYYI  
WA ʿALĀ ĀĀLIHI WA ṢAḤBIHI WA SALIM

Oh Allāh send blessings upon our liege-lord Muḥammad  
Your slave and Your Prophet and Your Messenger — the Unlettered Prophet —  
and upon his family and his companions — peace.

{3x}

تَسْلِمًا عَدَدَ مَا أَحَاطَ بِهِ عِلْمُكَ وَ خَطَّ بِهِ قَلَمُكَ وَ أَحْصَاهُ كِتَابُكَ  
و الرِّضَا عَنْ سَادَاتِنَا أَبِي بَكْرٍ وَ عُمَرُ وَ عُثْمَانُ وَ عَلِيٌّ  
وَ عَنِ الصَّحَابَةِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَ عَنِ التَّابِعِينَ وَ تَابِعِي التَّابِعِينَ  
بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
«سُبْحَنَ رَبِّكَ رَبَّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ◊  
وَ سَلَّمَ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ◊  
وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ◊»

TASLIMAN ‘ADADA MĀ ‘AḤĀṬĀ BIHI ‘ILMUKA  
WA KḤAṬṬI BIHI QALAMUKA WA ‘AḤṢĀHU KITĀBUKA  
WA-R-RIDĀ ‘AN SĀDĀTINĀ ‘ABĪ BAKRIŊ WA ‘UMARA WA ‘UTHMĀN WA ‘ALĪY:  
WA ‘ANI-Ş-ŞAḤĀBATI ‘AJĀMA‘ĪN WA ‘ANI-T-TĀBĪ‘ĪNA WA TĀBĪ‘Ī-T-TĀBĪ‘ĪNA-  
BI-‘IḤSĀNI ‘ILA YŌWMI-D-DĪN:  
SUBḤĀNA RABBIKA RABBI-L-‘IZZATI ‘AMMĀ YAṢĪFŪN ◊  
WA SALĀMUN ‘ALĀ-L-MURSALĪN ◊  
WA-L-HAMDU LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-‘ALĀMĪN ◊

Abundant-peacecommensurate with Your All-encompassing Knowledge  
and with that which was written with Your Pen  
and that which is enumerated and registered in Your Book.  
The Contentment [of Allāh] be upon Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī  
and the Companions and the Followers and those who follow the Followers  
with an abiding goodness until the Day when the Debt is reckoned.  
“Glory to your Lord — the Lord of Majesty — beyond that which they ascribe to Him  
and peace be upon the Messengers and Praise be to the Lord of the Worlds.”  
{37:180-182}  
{3x}

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

LĀĀ ‘ILĀHA ‘ILLĀ-LLĀH

There is no deity except Allāh  
{100-1000x}

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

MUḤAMMADUR-RASŪLU-LLĀH

Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh  
{1x}

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

ʾASHHADU ʾAN ʾILĀHA ʾILLĀ-LLĀH  
WA ʾASHHADU ʾAN MUḤAMMADUR-RASŪLU-LLĀH

I bear witness that there is no deity except Allāh  
and I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh  
{3x}

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

ṢALLĀ-LLĀHU ʿALAYHI WA SALLIM

Blessings of Allāh be upon him and peace  
{1x}

ثَبَّتْنَا رَبَّ بِقَوْلِهَا

«م٣»

وَأَنْفَعَنَا يَا رَبَّ بِفَضْلِهَا

«م٣»

وَأَجْعَلْنَا مِنْ خَيْرِ أَهْلِهَا

«م٣»

آمِينَ آمِينَ آمِينَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ

«م٣»

ThĀBITNĀ RABBI BI-QŌWLAHĀ

WA-N-FAʿNĀ YĀ RABBI BI-FADLIHĀ

WA-JāʿALNĀ MIN KhĪYĀRI ʾAHLIHĀ

ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

Root us oh Lord in its utterance. • Benefit us oh Lord by its excellence.  
and make us to be from the best of its people.

So be it. So be it. So be it. So be it. Lord of the Worlds

{repeat each phrase separately 3x }

أَصْبَحْنَا فِي حِمَاكَ يَا مُوَلَانَا مَسْنَا فِي رِضَاكَ يَا مُوَلَانَا

ʾAṢBAḤNĀ FĪ ḤIMĀKA YĀ MŌWLĀNĀ MASSINĀ FĪ RIḌĀKA YĀ MŌWLĀNĀ

We have awoken under your protection oh Master make us to enter into evening in Your Pleasure.  
{3x in the morning}

{and follow with; āāmin, āāmin, āāmin, āāmin ya rabbi-l-ʿālamīn 3X }



أَمْسَيْنَا فِي حِمَاكَ يَا مُوَلَانَا صَبَحْنَا فِي رِضَاكَ يَا مُوَلَانَا

ʾAMSAYNANĀ FĪ ḤIMĀKA YĀ MŌWLĀNĀ ṢABBIḤNĀ FĪ RIḌĀKA YĀ MŌWLĀNĀ

We have entered evening under your protection oh Master make us to awake in Your Pleasure.  
{3x in the evening}

أَمِينَ آمِينَ آمِينَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

So be it. So be it. So be it. Lord of the Worlds  
{3x}

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَنْتَ وَاحِدٌ رَبُّنَا يَا مُجَمِّعُنَا آغْفِرْ ذُنُوبَنَا

LĀ Ā ʾILĀHA ʾILLĀ-ʾANTA WĀḤIDUṢ RABBUNĀ  
YĀ MUJAMMIʿNĀ-Gḥ-FIR DḥUNŪBANĀ

There is no deity but You — One — Our Lord  
Oh {You} who draw us together forgive our faults.  
{3x}

أَمِينَ آمِينَ آمِينَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

So be it. So be it. So be it. Lord of the Worlds  
{3x}

آغْفِرْ لَنَا مَا مَضَى وَأَصْلِحْ لَنَا مَا بَقِيَ بِحُرْمَةِ الْأَبْرَارِ  
يَا عَالِمَ الْأَسْرَارِ

ʾIGḥ-FIR LANĀ MĀ MAḌAYA WA ʾAṢLIḤ LANĀ MĀ BAQIYA BI-ḤURMATI-L-ʾAbārĀR  
YĀ ʿĀLIMA-L-ʿASRĀR

Forgive us that which is past and render good that which remains by the sanctity of the Godly  
Oh Knower of the Secrets  
{3x}

أَمِينَ آمِينَ آمِينَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

So be it. So be it. So be it. Lord of the Worlds  
{3x}

يَا عَالَمَ السِّرِّ مِنَّا لَا تَكْشِفَ السِّتْرَ عَنَّا

YĀ-ĀLIMA-S-SIRRI MINNĀ LĀ YAKShIFA-S-SITRA ʿANĀ

Oh Knower of our secrets do not lift from us the Veil of Your Concealment.

{3x}

آمِينَ آمِينَ آمِينَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

So be it. So be it. So be it. So be it. Lord of the Worlds

{3x}

يَا مَوْلَانَا يَا مُجِيبُ مَنْ يَرْجُوكَ لَا يَخِيبُ  
تَوَسَّلْنَا بِالْحَبِيبِ • أَقْضِ حَاجَتَنَا  
قَرِيبُ هَذَا وَقْتُ الْحَاجَاتِ يَا حَاضِرًا لَا يَغِبُ

YĀ MŌWLĀNĀ YĀ MUJĪBĀ • MAʿNY-YAJŪKA LĀ YAKhĪBĀ •

TŌWSALNĀ BI-L-HABĪBĀ • ʾIQDĪ ḤĀJATNĀ •

QARĪBĀ HADhĀ WAQʾATU-L-ḤĀJĀTI YĀ ḤĀḌĪRAL-LĀ YAGhĪBĀ •

Oh Master! Oh Most Gracious Respondent! Who puts his hope in you is not disappointed.

We intercede through the Beloved • Grant us our need soon.

The time of granting needs is near oh Ever-Present who is not absent.

{3x}

آمِينَ آمِينَ آمِينَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN RABBI-L-ʿĀLAMĪN

So be it. So be it. So be it. So be it. Lord of the Worlds

{3x}

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَبَارِكْ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَعَلٰى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ

ALLAHUMMA ṢALLI WA SALIMUN ʿALĀ SAYYIDINĀ MUḤAMMADĀ •

WA BĀRIK ʿALĀ SAYYIDINĀ MUḤAMMADĀ •

WA ʿALĀ ĀĀLI SAYYIDINĀ MUḤAMMADĀ •

Oh Allāh benedictions and peace on our liege-lord Muḥammad  
and blessings on our liege-lord Muḥammad and on the family of our liege-lord Muḥammad

{10x}

آمِينَ آمِينَ آمِينَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN ĀĀMĪN RABBI-L-‘ĀLAMĪN

So be it. So be it. So be it. Lord of the Worlds

{3x}

وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

WA SALAMUN ‘ALĀ-L-MURSALĪN WA-L-ḤAMDU LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-‘ĀLAMĪN

and peace be upon the Messengers and all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of all the Worlds

{3x}

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

BISMI-LLĀHI-R-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM •

AL-ḤAMDU-LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-‘ĀLAMĪN •

AR-RAḤMĀNI-R-RAḤĪM •

MĀLIKI YAWMI-D-DĪN •

‘IYYĀKA NA‘BUDU WA ‘IYYĀKA NASTA‘IN •

‘IHDINĀ-Ṣ-ṢIRĀṬA-L-MUSTAQĪM •

ṢIRĀṬA-L-LADḤĪNA ‘AN‘AMTA ‘ALAYHIM •

GḤAYRI-L-MAGḤDŪBI ‘ALAYHIM WA LĀ-D-ḌĀĀĀLLĪN •

*In the Name of Allāh, the Mercy Full, Bestower of Mercy •*

*Praise to Allāh, Sustaining Lord of the Worlds •*

*The Mercy Full, The Bestower of Mercy •*

*Master of the Day of Requit •*

*To You our worship — and to You our petitions •*

*Guide us on the Straight Path •*

*The Path of those upon whom You have bestowed blessings  
not that of those upon whom is Your Wrath or who are astray. •*

{1:1-7}

{3x}

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ۚ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

'INNA-LLĀHA WA MALĀĀ'IKATAHU YUṢALLŪNA 'ALA-N-NABĪYY  
YĀĀ 'AYYUHĀ-L-LADhĪNA 'ĀMANŪ ṢALLŪ 'ALAYHI WA SALLIMŪ TASLĪMĀ

*Truly Allāh and His Angels bless the Prophet  
Oh you who believe bless him and pray him peace in abundance.*

{33:56}

صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ وَسَلَامُهُ وَتَحِيَّاتُهُ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
عَبْدِكَ وَنَبِيِّكَ وَرَسُولِكَ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ  
عَدَدَ الشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ وَعَدَدَ كَلِمَاتِ رَبِّنَا أَلْتَامَاتِ الْمُبَارَكَاتِ

ṢALAWATU-LLĀHU WA SALĀMUHU WA TAḤIYYĀTUHU WA RAḤMATUHU  
WA BARAKĀTUHU 'ALĀ SAYYIDINĀ MUḤAMMADĀ  
'ABĀDIKA WA NABIYYIKA WA RASŪLIKA-N-NABIYYI-L-'UMMIYYI  
WA 'ALĀ ĀĀLIHI WA ṢAḤBIHI  
'ADADA-Sh-SHAF'I WA-L-WATRI  
WA 'ADADA KALIMĀTI RABBINĀ-T-TĀMMĀTI-L-MUBĀRAKĀT

Benedictions of Allāh and His Peace and His Greetings and His Mercy and His Blessing  
on our liege-lord Muḥammad  
Your Slave and Your Prophet and Your Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet  
and upon his household and his companions  
an amount according to the number of the even and the odd  
and an ammount according to the number of the Blessed Words of your Lord.

{3x}

وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ  
وَهُوَ حَسْبُنَا وَنَعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ  
فَنَعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنَعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

WA LĀ ḤŌWLA WA LĀ QUWWATA 'ILLA BI-LLĀHI-L-'ALLIYYI-L-'ADhĪM •  
WA HUWA ḤASBUNĀ WA NI'MA-L-WAKĪL •  
FA-NI'MU-L-MŌWLĀ WA NI'MU-N-NAṢĪR

There is no strength and no power save in Allāh, The Exalted, The Sublime  
He is our Sufficiency and our most excellent Guardian  
and how excellent a Master is He and how excellent a Defender.

{1x}

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ◦  
وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ◦  
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ◦

SUBHĀNA RABBIKA RABBI-L-‘IZZATI ‘AMMĀ YAṢIFŪN ◦  
WA SALĀMUN ‘ALĀ-L-MURSALĪN ◦  
WA-L-ḤAMDU LI-LLĀHI RABBI-L-‘ALĀMĪN ◦

*“Glory to your Lord — the Lord of Majesty — beyond that which they ascribe to Him  
and peace be upon the Messengers and Praise be to the Lord of all the Worlds.”*

{37:180-182}

{1x}



يَا مَوْلَانَا يَا كَرِيمُ • أَرْحَمْنَا يَا رَحِيمُ

YĀ MŌWLĀNĀ YĀ KARĪM • ‘ARḤAMNĀ YĀ RAḤĪM

Oh Master, Oh Generous — Have Mercy on us Oh Bestower of Mercy

{3x}

سُبْحَانَ الْمَوْلَى الدَّائِمِ

SUBḤĀNĀ-L-MŌWLĀ-D-DĀ’IM

Glory to the Eternally Enduring Master

{3x}

الْفَاتِحَةِ

AL-FĀTIḤAH

The Opening

{read 1x}

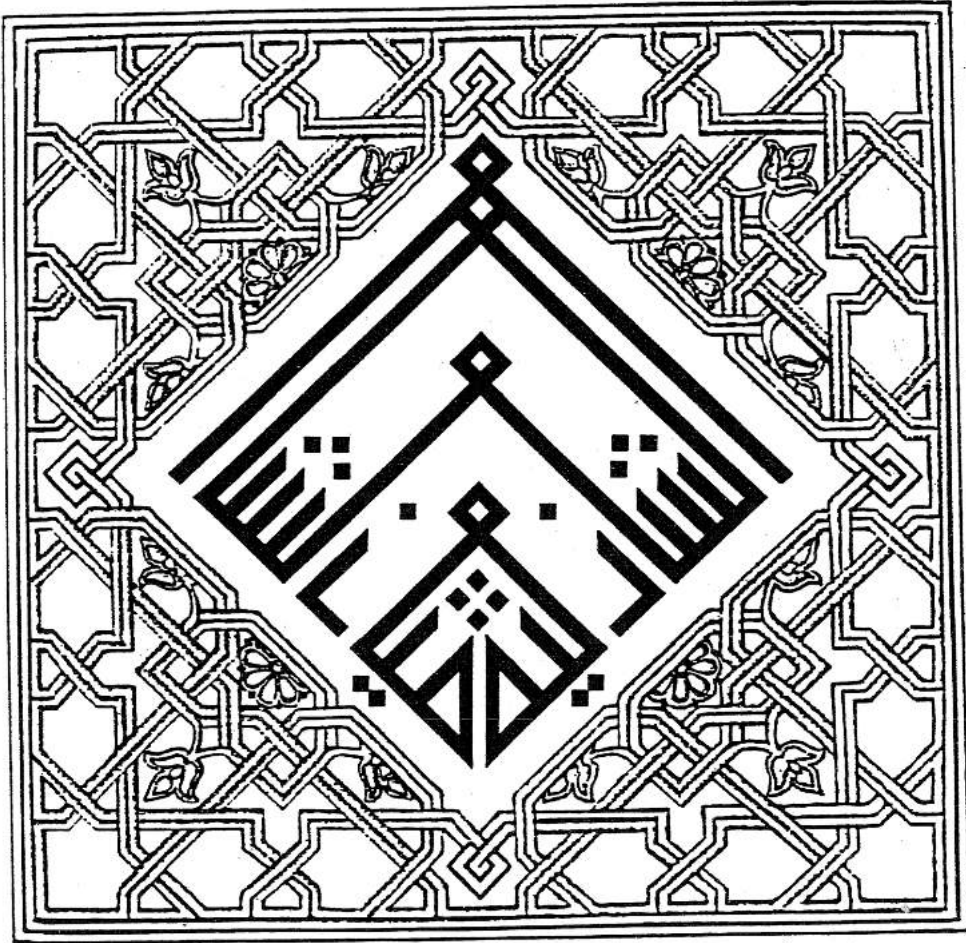






*Humaythīra by night in the present time*

المَدْرَسَةُ الشَّادْهُولِيَّةُ



The School of the Shādhūliyyah

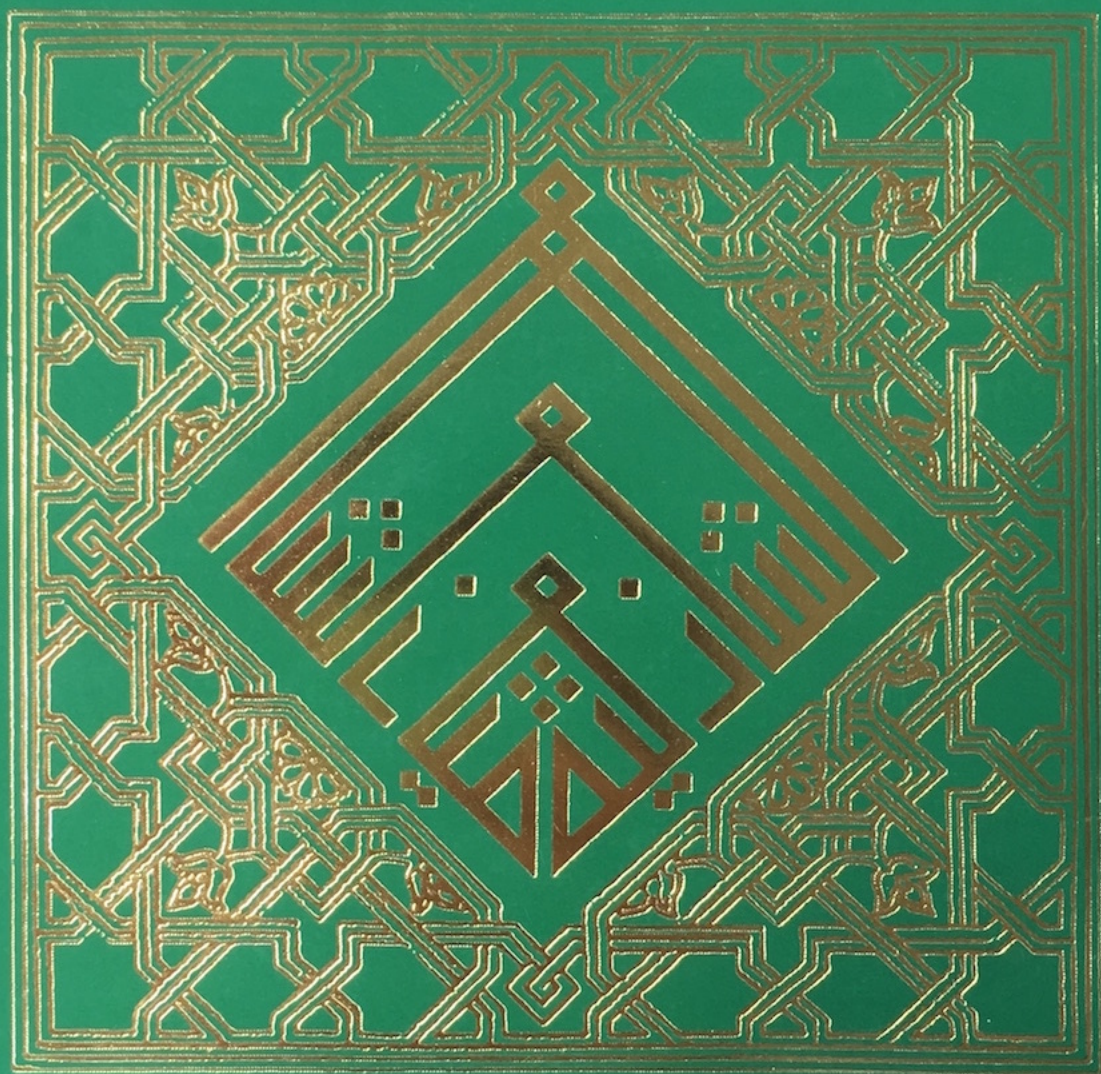
الجزء الثاني  
أصول الشَّادْهُولِيَّةِ







# المدرسة الشاذلية



The School of the Shādhḍhuliyyah

الجزء الثاني

أصول الشاذلية